

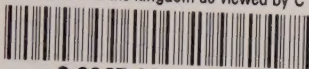
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THE CROSS AND THE
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THE CROSS AND THE KINGDOM

*As Viewed by Christ Himself and
in the Light of Evolution*

BY THE

REV. W. L. WALKER

William L.
FORMERLY OF LAURENCEKIRK

AUTHOR OF

"THE SPIRIT AND THE INCARNATION" "CHRISTIAN THEISM AND A SPIRITUAL MONISM"
"THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION OR AT-ONE-MENT" ETC.

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TO THE MEMORY
OF THE
REV. ANTHONY THOMPSON GOWAN, M.A, D.D.
WHOSE GREAT LEARNING AND FIDELITY TO CHRIST
THE WRITER ADMIRERD
TO WHOSE KINDNESS HE OWES MUCH
AND WHOSE TEACHING IN THE HALL OF THE
SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES
HELPED TO INSPIRE HIM
TO SEEK AND TO FOLLOW
TRUTH ONLY

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE theme of this Volume is the relation of the Cross of Christ to the Divine Forgiveness and the bringing in of the Kingdom of God in those spiritual and eternal aspects in which it comes to us. There are other aspects of the Cross that have been only touched upon, *e.g.*, as the key to the solution of the problem of suffering and the manifestation of the hidden Wisdom and Love which bring good out of evil and make the darkest things of life the instruments of the highest good—the great illustration of the presence of God where to the eye of sense He least seems to be. The Cross thus viewed is a Gospel in itself. But the problem that most exercises the minds of many is the relation of the Cross to sin and forgiveness; why it was necessary, and how that which was such a dark human crime against God can have been the medium through which His forgiving Love went forth to the world; why it was necessary for Christ so to suffer, and how His suffering was a manifestation of the righteousness of God. Some things in this last regard have been more fully dealt with in the writer's *The Gospel of Reconciliation or At-one-ment* (T. & T. Clark, 1909), the main theme of which was really the expansion of a note on p. 199 of the First Edition of this Book.

While the Book in its substance and structure remains unchanged, the whole has been carefully revised and from Part IV. onward largely rewritten; a better arrangement of the chapters on "The Necessity, Nature, and Efficacy of the Cross" has been sought, a good deal of new matter

introduced, and an endeavour made to make the "Positive Statement" more simple and clear.

The section on the Cross in the light of Evolution was never intended to be a treatment of the doctrine of Evolution, but only to show the harmony of the Cross therewith and the light that is cast upon it therefrom. The subject of Evolution has been treated as fully as the present writer was able to do in *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*; *God, Christ, and Immortality in View of Evolution* (T. & T. Clark, 1906; 2nd ed., 1907). This part of the present Book has been to a considerable extent rewritten, and the writer desires to thank the Rev. Berkeley G. Collins, A.T.S., of Bluntisham, for some suggestions which have improved the last portion of Chapter I.

There has been some danger of late that *the Cross* should become separated in thought from *the Kingdom*, and that the Kingdom should be conceived as a kingdom of this world only or primarily—a kingdom of Social Good chiefly; but such can never be that Eternal Kingdom of God which Jesus died to bring in; nor can it ever meet the wants of the soul of man, or even realise the social good that it most laudably aims at. The Divine and Eternal must come into the human and temporal.

In the revolt from dogma also it is common to say that it is Christ Himself we have to do with, not doctrines about Him. But the question arises—*What Christ?* What does the Christ we are asked to receive stand for? If we are asked to receive Him as our *Life*, *what* was the life that lived in Christ? Was it not the life of God in man—the life of holy, self-transcending Love? If so, the great question is, How is that life to be quickened in *our* souls? Must not that life of God in some way enter and possess us more fully than it is ours "by nature"? Is it not the manifestation of God's love in Christ and our experience of it that shall do for us what we need? And

can that life of Love be quickened within a soul that turns itself toward God without any consciousness of sin and need of redemption? Must we not see God's love in Christ meeting a real need on our part, manifesting itself in such a relation to the sin of the world as shall at once humble the soul before God, make it responsive to the Love that showed itself in the Cross, and give confidence in the Divine Forgiveness? The Christ whom we are asked to receive is certainly one who, apart from the Cross, has the highest *moral claim* upon us as manifesting the true life of man; but He is also a Christ who had to die upon the Cross before His claim could come with power to men. The Cross was God's supreme appeal to sinful men. But if the Cross can be thought of as having no relation to sin and forgiveness, it is to be feared that the Divine appeal will not go deep enough, and that the cry of "Christ and not doctrines about Him" will prove but a barren one, so far as concerns the real salvation of men from self and the sin which is always the expression of that self, to that life of God which comes to win us for itself in Christ. Many of the theories of the Cross are such as we can no longer believe in; but if Christianity is to continue to prove itself "the power of God unto Salvation," there is no greater need than to seek such a doctrine of the Cross as shall be true to historical fact, free from all that is arbitrary and out of keeping with the Divine character and method of working, yet so expressive of the Divine Righteousness as shall save from sin, and such a manifestation of the Divine Love and Sacrifice as shall kindle an answering love for God in the heart, stronger than all our self-love. It is the desire to help towards this that is the motive of this Book.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THIS Book is intended as a defence and restatement of the Evangelical doctrine of the Cross, based on the teaching of Christ in the first three Gospels, and on His work as the Founder of the Kingdom of God—freed from some misconceptions and from certain objections that have been widely felt and sometimes urged against the doctrine.

Whatever imperfections it may have, it is the result of independent study, and of an earnest endeavour to apprehend and state a truth which the writer (who has had his own experience of the difficulties concerning it) regards as of the greatest importance for Christianity. While he does not believe that the Evangelical interpretation of the Cross *depends* on any *sayings* concerning it, he has “begun at the beginning” by a consideration of the genuineness of the sayings ascribed to Christ respecting His death. This subject has been much discussed of late by German theologians; and the writer has therefore, in addition to discussing in detail Professor Pfeiderer’s reasons for rejecting the sayings ascribed to Christ respecting His death—referring also in this connection to Professor Schmiedel’s Article on the Gospels in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*—made some references to a recent interesting work by Dr. Georg Hollmann, of Halle, dealing with the question. He finds that the aim of Dr. Hollmann is the same as his own, viz., to show the Cross in a natural connection with the teaching and life-work of Christ, as these are presented in the

Synoptic Gospels. But the present writer endeavours to show that a much fuller conception of the Cross, in the Evangelical sense, is reached by means of a fuller conception of what is involved in the idea of the Kingdom of God and its establishment.

He has found himself at several points in agreement with Ritschl; but, while seeking with him to show that the Cross must be viewed as the fulfilment of His vocation by our Lord, the writer differs materially from that great theologian in his conception of what this meant to Christ, and, consequently, in his ultimate view of the Cross. If the present effort helps to show that the Evangelical doctrine of the Cross can be based on the presentation of Christ in the first three Gospels, and can be seen to be in natural connection with, and the culmination of, His teaching and work, it will not have been made in vain. At the same time, he hopes that he has been enabled to do something towards removing certain misconceptions of what is involved in this conception of the Cross, and to state the Gospel in terms that do justice at once to its Divine freeness and fulness and to its ultimate ethical purpose in relation to the Kingdom of God. The Cross and the Kingdom are, in the writer's opinion, inseparable.

It is largely for this reason that he treats at the same time the doctrine of the Cross in relation to Evolution. Evolution and the Kingdom of God (to bring in which Christ died) are closely related terms. If the one expresses the Divine *method* in the world, the other sets forth the Divine *purpose*; and it is important to ask whether the two are in harmony. An opportunity is also thus afforded for discussing such subjects as "Sin" and "Grace."

In a previous work—*The Spirit and the Incarnation*—the writer sought to show the reality of the living Christ as the incarnation of God in Humanity, and as the present

Saviour of men. But, apart from the power that comes through the completed work of Christ on our behalf, the living Christ is but imperfectly conceived. The living Christ represents a certain Presence and Power of God, which, through the life and work of the incarnate Saviour, has entered our Humanity—the Holy Spirit, as the great Christian Gift—a Spiritual Presence and Power, which, in its ethical and spiritual influences, must not be separated from the Person of Christ, nor the Person of Christ therefrom. This Divine, ethical Power comes, above all, *through the Cross*. The present work may therefore be considered as being in some measure a supplement to the former one, in which the doctrine of the Cross was presented rather from the standpoint of the Apostolic interpretation than from the point of view of Christ Himself. At the same time, there is no real discordance between the two.

The writer has read with deep interest Dr. Moberly's profound work, *Atonement and Personality*, and, while he differs from it on some important points, he has felt its inspiration. He has been able also, in revising this work, to take advantage of the publication of the translation of the first volume of Dalman's *Words of Jesus*, and of the Articles bearing on his subject in Volume IV. of Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. The writer's best thanks are due to the Rev. A. E. Garvie, M.A., B.D., of Montrose, for kind assistance readily rendered.

CONGREGATIONAL MANSE,
LAURENCEKIRK, *September*, 1902.

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THE CROSS AND THE KINGDOM



INTRODUCTORY

THE Cross was the central fact in the Apostolic preaching of Christianity. It is the central fact in the world's history. Nothing at all comparable to it has ever been placed before the eyes of men ; nothing has so greatly impressed those to whom it has been made known ; nothing has exerted such a beneficent influence in the world ; nothing has so touched the heart, so moved the will, so excited questionings in the human mind. We speak here specially of the Evangelical conception of the Cross as that on which, in some real sense, "Christ died for our sins," through which we are brought to God, find forgiveness, are inspired by the spirit of a new life of love, and, in spite of our present sinfulness, made the heirs of God's sinless and eternal Kingdom.

Sometimes, however, this view of the Cross has been overshadowed, and it has been necessary to proclaim it afresh, to specially defend it, and to attempt to restate its essential significance. That there are difficulties connected with it cannot be denied. The multitude of theories that have been propounded concerning the Cross in its Evangelical acceptation sufficiently show this. Difficulties of another kind have also been often experienced, especially how to reconcile the necessity for

the Cross in the Evangelical sense with the teaching of Christ concerning the love of God as the Father of men, and His ready forgiveness of the returning sinner; also how to see the Cross as having a natural relation to the whole teaching and work of Christ as the Founder of the Kingdom of God, and not something arbitrarily introduced. In comparatively recent times, moreover, new difficulties have arisen, and the conditions of the discussion have been greatly changed. At the present time we find ourselves confronted by (amongst others) the following new elements:—

1st. By a strong and widespread tendency to go back for our Christianity to the teaching of Jesus Himself, especially as that is recorded in the first three Gospels. There seems to be, at the same time, a very general impression that we can scarcely derive the full Evangelical conception of the Cross from the teaching of Jesus and the representation of His life-work as given us in those Gospels which are believed to afford the most truly historical representation of Christ.

2nd. By the new or "higher" *Criticism* of the New Testament, especially of the Gospels in which, on the part of some of its representatives, sayings of Christ once relied on are either questioned or wholly rejected. The position is very different to-day from what it was when Dr. Dale produced his powerful and popular work on the Atonement. He could then say with unshaken confidence, and without any sense of the need of laying a critical foundation on which to build: "Let the Gospels stand alone, let the testimony of the Epistles be entirely suppressed, and the strong foundation of that conception of the death of Christ, which has been the refuge of penitents and the joy of saints for 1800 years, will remain unshaken. The words of Christ, and the words of Christ alone, are a sufficient vindication of the ancient faith of the Church."

Of course, the advocates of a different interpretation could always appeal to certain *other* words of Christ, as, for example, His Parable of the Prodigal Son, and to the general strain of His teaching, in its earlier period at any rate, which proclaimed Divine Forgiveness, without any hint of the need of an atonement. But now the words of Christ specially founded on by the advocates of the Evangelical doctrine are questioned; nay, it is broadly asserted by some that Jesus Himself never made any such references to His death as those we have been accustomed to found on. Of course, ever since the time of Strauss and Baur especially, these questions have been agitated, but attention was at first concentrated mainly on the results of criticism as these affected "the Supernatural" and "the Person of Christ." And, although the methods of those earlier critics have been largely modified, the same strain of criticism has run on, till, in the hands of some of its representatives, it has reached the climax of the rejection of the whole of the sayings ascribed to Jesus respecting His death. The methods of this criticism in relation to the Gospels were introduced to English readers some years ago by Professor Carpenter in his interesting and suggestive book, *The First Three Gospels: their Origin and Relations*; and some of its latest conclusions have been brought prominently before us by Professor Schmiedel's article on the Gospels in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Professor Pfeiderer also, long a leader in this school of criticism, in an article originally written for *The New World*, and published in a volume entitled *Evolution and Religion*, maintains and seeks to prove that not one of those passages in our Gospels which refer to the death of Christ on the Cross was really uttered by Christ Himself, but that they are all, without exception, vaticinations *ex eventu*—the result of the Church's belief. The manner in which such questions arise and such

conclusions become possible has been set before us by Dr. Moffat in his Prolegomena to *The Historical New Testament*. It is indeed plain to any careful reader of the New Testament, especially if he pays attention to the margin of the Revised Version, that there are questions as to the proper contents of the Gospels, and differences in their reports as we have them. Additions have apparently been sometimes made in the later Gospels to the narratives and sayings in the earliest Gospel, which is generally believed to be that of Mark. Our Lord's sayings are also to some extent differently reported, and although the differences are not of much account, the variations cannot be all equally correct. Such an addition as that in Matt. xxvii. 52, 53 is very widely regarded as un-historical. It is therefore a perfectly fair question, How far do these later additions extend? Moreover, if additions and variations have been made in the Gospels as we possess them, it is at least *possible* that they may have been also made in the *sources* of these Gospels, whether written or oral. Further, the Gospels were all written, in their present form at least, after the belief of the Church concerning Christ and His work had been formed; it may be said that they, of necessity, reflect that belief—nay, that they were written with the object of creating the same belief on the part of others, and under the influence of Old Testament prophecy, which was believed to have found complete, even minute, fulfilment in Christ. The critical position, looked at even in this general way, is by no means an utterly unreasonable one, or one that can be treated with indifference. The question of the composition of the Synoptic Gospels has become one of the most complicated literary problems of the present day; and however “wild” the methods and “extreme” the results of certain representatives of the Higher Criticism, Christianity cannot shrink from the questions that are

raised concerning its sources, and the Christian spirit can have no wish to rest in anything but sifted and established truth. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Truth itself, and no one who has any real belief in that Spirit will ever seek to stop short of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If criticism should seem to run wild at times, it is always possible (as has been said) to appeal "from Philip drunk to Philip sober." There is a sober and reverent criticism which stands rooted in Christian experience, and is inspired by love for the Saviour and devotion to the Kingdom of God; and this, instead of merely crying out against destructive criticism, will seek to meet it fairly on its own ground, confident that only truth can serve the cause of Him who is the Truth. As has been well said, "Any form of New Testament study is critical, exactly in so far as it admits and affirms the necessity of bringing the intellectual methods of our time to bear upon the study of the Bible. That is the only test. A scholar need not be uncritical, even if he has a very positive faith in the supernatural. Neither is he made critical by the most positive rejection of it. Criticism is a saving necessity laid on us by the Lord of the Church. With or without our will, we must follow Him. The honour of Christ is at stake."¹

3rd. There is, we believe, a deep-seated conviction in the minds of those who have thought most deeply on the subject, that any true and satisfying doctrine of the Cross must be one that can be seen to be in harmony with the whole teaching and work of Christ, and indeed its natural culmination. This is due, perhaps, in no small measure to the influence of Ritschl, who made prominent the fact that the death of Christ must be regarded as coming to Him and accepted by Him in the fulfilment of His vocation. That the Cross must be so regarded seems self-evidently true.

¹ Professor Nash, *The History of the Higher Criticism*, pp. 152, 183.

It is further generally felt that it is to the first three Gospels we must go, in the first instance at any rate, for the most original presentation of the teaching and life-work of Jesus; and for that reason our present study is confined to these Gospels.

4th. Again, we stand in the presence of not only a new conception of the Scriptures, but of the universe itself, and of the Divine method of working therein. The doctrine of Evolution has given us a new view of the world and man, and of their relation to God, and it is impossible for us not to contemplate all subjects in its light. As a recent writer has said, "The effects of Darwinism have been by no means confined to the realm of science. It may be safely averred that Darwin's theory has contributed as much to the progress of intelligent study in the departments of both History and Religion, as it has to the advancement of any branch of natural science" (Professor Paterson in the *Temple Bible*: "Leviticus").¹ The Evolution doctrine has raised serious questions concerning the nature and source of sin and death, concerning Divine intervention, and the relation of God to man in general. Does this new doctrine support the Evangelical conception of the Cross, or is it opposed to it? Does it bring us any fresh and helpful light, or is it quite out of keeping with the order of ideas underlying the Christian doctrine? Granting God's presence and operation in evolution, has the Cross any such place in the Divine order of development as we have been accustomed to ascribe to it in relation to the Divine purposes? In a word, does

¹ On the other hand, Biblical conceptions have had no small influence on the formation of the conceptions of evolution. As has been truly said, "The idea of evolution, like the true conception of language and grammar, took shape outside the field of Biblical study. Yet the Biblical doctrine of the Kingdom of God is one of the main causes of the conception, for evolution was a social programme before it became a scientific hypothesis. The idea is not a trespasser upon the Biblical field" (Nash, *History of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 174 (note)).

our doctrine of the Cross find a divinely natural place in the universally accepted conception of evolution?

5th. May we not say, lastly, that there is a weariness of theories on this subject. Theories of the Cross are almost endless. There is dissatisfaction with them all, and a growing feeling that any completely satisfactory theory is impossible. The ethical interest has come more to its supremacy. Men want, they say, not doctrines, but ethics; not theories, but practice; not methods of justification, but actual everyday righteousness; not to form a theory of the Cross, but to feel its inspiration and to experience its power. Interest in a purely individual salvation has largely decayed, and a deepened feeling of humanity seeks something that seems higher and nobler. Christ as the Teacher is the Christ for to-day; to follow Him in the life, rather than to speculate on doctrine, is what is wanted. God is the great, all-wise, all-loving Father of us all; and surely we can trust Him without any theory of the Cross, or perhaps without any Cross in the Evangelical sense at all. If we must have a theory or doctrine of the Cross, let it be at least a simple one, such as we can preach to men without argumentation. We have much sympathy with the feeling thus indicated, especially with the sense that any true doctrine of the Cross must be fundamentally and throughout an ethical one, and not merely one for individual appropriation. But we believe that the Cross in the Evangelical sense is still the central fact of the Gospel, that it is this alone that gives us a Gospel, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. It is in the belief that its reality as such can be maintained in the presence of those new conditions of thought and elements of feeling, and that such a theory of it may be reached as shall meet all that is truest in them, that we address ourselves to the subject. No elaborate theory of the Cross is necessary for salvation, and no complete explanation of it may be *possible*, any

more than of aught else that is Divine. It is one of the glories of the Cross that it has appealed to men in so many different ways, and that it has met their need in so many different forms and under such varying conceptions of it. Still, the Cross as it comes to us in these Gospels is really very simple, and its efficiency has always rested on a certain kind of interpretation of it, namely, that which we seek to express by the term "Evangelical." What we need is to be able to maintain and commend this Evangelical conception of the Cross amidst the changed conditions of thought and feeling to-day. Without an intelligible, reason-satisfying doctrine, the Cross itself is apt to fade out of our thinking, its real power to cease to be felt in our preaching, and thus the great instrument which God has provided for the world's salvation will not be employed as it ought to be. God's gifts to men—of which the Cross, rightly understood, is the greatest—can only be received and held through the use of all the rational powers with which He has endowed us, and it is only in the exercise of all these powers that we can truly serve Him and His great cause in the world. There is, doubtless, an undogmatic Christianity which is not without influence for good, and many who decline to believe, or even to consider, Christian doctrines may be filled with aspirations and moved to endeavours which are, so far, truly Christian. But it must not be forgotten that these aspirations have really been kindled (however remotely it may seem) by influences that have radiated forth from a circle, the centre of which has been the Cross of Christ in its Evangelical interpretation. If this central fire be suffered to burn low, those influences will, in time, cease to be felt. But, in truth, the mind cannot rest without some attempt to explain to itself the need for the Cross and the secret of its efficacy. In giving such explanations, things are sometimes being said that shock the moral sense and prevent many from accepting the Evangelical faith; while, on the

other hand, in the endeavour to avoid such statements, the vital, soul-satisfying, and saving element has sometimes been lost sight of. For these reasons, we seek to go back to those Gospels which are regarded as giving us the most purely historical representation of our Lord, to see if we cannot find from them such a conception of the Cross as shall be free from all that needlessly offends the moral sense, and yet give us all that the soul requires for its confidence towards God in the forgiveness of sin, and for its spiritual life before Him in the service of His Kingdom and in the hope of the life everlasting. If we really get into the mind of Christ Himself concerning His Cross, it is certain that the Cross will come to us with a new power and inspiration.

PART I



THE NECESSARY IMPLICATION OF THE CROSS

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE CROSS

LET us ask first, What would Christianity be without the Cross in its Evangelical acceptation? It would be simply the teaching of Jesus, up to and exclusive of the Cross in that sense. Let us, in the first instance, assume that the sayings of Jesus respecting His death are open to question. This is, as we have seen, a position that has been seriously taken, and it is one which the defenders of the Cross must with all seriousness keep before them. What, then, was the teaching of Jesus apart from the Cross, and what is the impression that His life, with the Cross left out, makes upon us? The teaching of Jesus apart from the Cross, and as those who leave out the Cross would for the most part accept it, was, in the main, that God is the loving Father of men; that we are created to be, in the highest moral and spiritual sense, His sons and daughters; that our true life is to be found in seeking to realise this our sonship, or, in other words, the Kingdom of God. The coming of the Kingdom of God was the Gospel that Jesus preached—that which should bring all real blessings to men. He proclaimed that Kingdom as at hand, and invited men by repentance and faith to become the members of it. It was, first of all, an inward and spiritual Kingdom, having its seat in the heart—God's reign within us; but it was also to be openly manifested in the world, and it extended into eternity. In this last respect it was practically identical with the "Heaven" in which He bade

us lay up our treasures, and in which He promised His disciples a reward far outweighing all that they might have to endure in this present time. God, their Father, had, He said, a constant care over them, and, in spite of all that men might do to them,—even though they should kill them,—not a hair of their heads should perish. “Live in this faith in God, free from all carking care in life and in death; be the loving, trustful, and obedient children of your Heavenly Father; seek first His Kingdom and righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.”

It is a bright and blessed Gospel, most inspiring and sustaining, *if it be true*, and if we can comply with the conditions which make it a Gospel to the individual. But what are the grounds of our confidence in it as preached by Christ, apart from the Cross evangelically interpreted? It did not commend itself to many when Jesus preached it. Sometimes it seemed that the Kingdom of Heaven “suffered violence,” and that men were eagerly pressing into it. It may well have been His own reasonable expectation that they would do so. But in the long run, and on the whole, the results were extremely disappointing. The Kingdom of God did not come in that fulness which Jesus seemed to anticipate, not to speak of its coming in “power and glory.” The responsible, “well-to-do,” “religious” people (religious in the ecclesiastical sense) utterly rejected Him, and ere long, from even the “common people,” who at first seemed to hear Him gladly, the cry arose, “Away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him!” Even His chosen disciples “forsook Him and fled.” His own reward and His end, as far as our eyes can follow Him, was the Cross of shame, approached through an agony strange and awful, and marked for all time by the cry, “My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”—a cry which is interpreted by Professor Pfeiderer as expressing “the overthrow of His

holiest hopes," and if so, must we not add, "of the faith He had lived by."¹ The Cross *in this sense* cannot be left out; but, taken thus apart from an Evangelical interpretation, what is it? "A fearful tragedy," says Professor Pfeiderer. Yes, it is the most fearful tragedy that has ever been enacted under the sun. What a finale it furnishes for the lofty and gracious teaching of Christ! God is our loving Father, He declared. Where was His fatherly love in relation to this His noblest and most faithful Son? The Kingdom of God in the heart is the supreme blessedness: where was this blessedness of the Kingdom in that heart into which the Kingdom had come in its richest fulness? God for ever cares for us, even though man may slay us: yes, but at the last the Master's own high faith breaks down, and He passes away, leaving that awful cry to echo through the centuries, like a wail of despair from a heart whose most sacred confidence has been shattered, whose highest hopes have been blasted—the cry of a heart out of the deepest darkness—a heart that has broken.

Will you say that He rose again in spirit and in truth; that the grain of wheat must die in order to bring forth fruit; that His Spirit, His principle, His faith, came forth from His sepulchre to be the abiding portion of all the world? Yes; but *how*? Professor Pfeiderer says most truly, "With the fearful tragedy of this personal end of life, the rise of the higher life that has grown out of His living and dying can alone reconcile us."² But we must ask, *How* did this higher life so come to men? What brought it up from the dead? How, in the face of that

¹ Professor Schmiedel (who himself repudiates the thought) says that it is "now asserted in a more and more emphatic way that Jesus died in despair" (*Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 50).

² *Evolution and Theology*, p. 203.

dark ending, did there come to be this new and glorious beginning? *The whole question ultimately turns on the answer that we give to this.*

But meanwhile we ask, What real Gospel is there for men in that beautiful faith which itself breaks down at the last? What evidence have we here of the *reality* of the God whom Jesus preached, or of the blessedness of His Kingdom in the heart? It is not outward good that we seek to see, but surely we may look for inward support and satisfaction. We may adopt "the faith of Jesus," and we may strive to follow Him in fidelity to God, whatever we may have to suffer; and if we do so, we shall find it to be blessed, even though we may meet the Cross,—this every true child of God knows and holds fast; but where in all this is *the Gospel* that shall win the world to God? Where is there that manifestation of the Father that shall woo the prodigal in the far-off country back to his Father's home? Where is the comfort to the heart that is crushed by the weight of its sins, and that *fears* to arise and go to the Father? Where is the peace which the awakened conscience seeks and cannot rest without finding? Where, in a word, is there any power that shall bring the Kingdom of God, as Jesus anticipated, into the world? Nay, where is there any evidence of God's presence at all? He is silent; He neither speaks nor saves. To close our eyes to these questions is to ignore the deepest necessities of man as he actually is in the world, and the requirements of God Himself if His Kingdom is to come on this earth. And, finally, would it be possible for us to adopt and hold fast that "faith of Jesus," were it not for our knowledge of that which *followed* the Cross—that emergence of the spiritual Christ from the tomb—that resurrection of His Gospel from the dead into newness of life? only in this do we find the answer of God. We repeat, therefore, that the real question is, *To what was this resurrection due?*

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY WITH THE CROSS BROUGHT IN

CHRISTIANITY rose from the dead ; but *How* did it arise ? The Spirit of Christ, or the spiritual Christ, came to reign when the Christ after the flesh had been crucified, and He could not have so come before ; but what was it that brought this spiritual Christ in this new power to men ?

It is common to say that it was the bodily resurrection of Jesus that led to this spiritual resurrection ; that it was this that restored His disciples' faith, and brought the revived and spiritual Christ to them. But those whom we have in view at present do not acknowledge that bodily resurrection. It can, besides, be strongly argued that belief in the physical resurrection *followed* the prior *spiritual* resurrection of Christ in His disciples' hearts. In any case, those who do not admit the physical resurrection cannot point to it as the cause of the spiritual resurrection in question ; and even though the physical resurrection, or such visions as are equivalent to it, or a *belief* in such resurrection, be affirmed, this could not have been more than a step towards the new faith and life that came to men. Something *more* was needed to restore full faith in Jesus as the Messiah, *much* more in order to bring in that entirely new conception of His Messiahship, which was also the power of a new and victorious spiritual life in the world. What was it, then, that not only brought Christ back to men, but brought Him back as a radically transfigured Christ—a Christ no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit ? We answer

✓ that it was *the Cross evangelically interpreted*. Apart from this, the spiritual Christ would never have come, nor the Gospel have risen from the dead. This brought not only the spiritual Christ up from the grave, to reign for evermore, but also the Kingdom of God in its power into the hearts of men. It transformed that dark scene on Calvary into the brightest light that has ever shone on this sinning and suffering world; it changed that seeming eclipse of faith into the full-orbed shining of the Sun of the Love Divine. Into the departing darkness we gaze, and, lo! a glorious face forms in the gloom, and we know it to be the face of our Father. It brings to men's hearts the Gospel that the sorrowful soul was longing for, and the peace that the burdened conscience can rest in, and it comes with that power of the Love Divine that can win our hearts for our God and Father, that can both lure and light the prodigal home, and that can bring the Kingdom of God with power into the world.

It is indisputable matter of history that the Cross, evangelically interpreted, did all this, that it was this presentation of the Cross alone that accomplished it. So ✓ that if, while leaving out the Cross in this sense, we still maintain our faith by going past the darkness in which the outward life of the Great Teacher ends to the spiritually risen Christ, in whose spiritual resurrection we find again the authentication that our faith seemed to have lost, it is in borrowed light we are walking; the illumination we rejoice in could never have come save through that Evangelical interpretation of the Cross, which we know, as a matter of historical fact, *did* bring it.

This is a consideration of the utmost importance, and it shows us at the same time our true attitude in the presence of the Cross. The Cross is a fact, a historical fact, that ✓ we have to *interpret*. And we have to interpret it in the light of Christ's Gospel-teaching concerning God and con-

cerning His own and man's relation to God. We cannot get past this necessity. We follow the teaching of Jesus so far—admiringly, perhaps,—and then we come to the Cross—the awful Cross. What does it mean in a moral and spiritual view of the world, and in the light of that Fatherhood of God we have been rejoicing in? Why should He who so delighted to proclaim the Father, whose whole soul was devoted to His service, who sought nothing for Himself, but all for God and His Kingdom, suffer thus, and end in this darkness the course begun in such brightness and confidence of faith? “Because He under-estimated the actual powers of the real world,” we are told.¹ But, in that case, did He not also under-estimate the power of that God whom He proclaimed as *above* the world? In plain words, was not His roseate view of God a mistaken one? Do you say that He always taught His disciples that they might have to suffer—although, in that case, it would be strange if He had overlooked that necessity for Himself? Are we reminded that suffering has been throughout all historical time the lot of the “servant of God,”—the more ardent his devotion to God and Righteousness, the more full his cup of suffering? that in Jesus Christ we behold not only “the Prince of Saints,” but the saintly King of Martyrs? True; but where was the blessedness *within* of which He spoke, as the portion of all the faithful, even if suffering sons of God? Where was the holy joy which we might reasonably have expected to witness in one who bade His disciples “leap for joy” when they were persecuted of men, and such as not a few of His martyr-followers have actually manifested at the stake? Apart from an Evangelical interpretation of the Cross, do we not seem here to witness a complete break-down, not only, as Pfeiderer says, “of His religious-social ideals,” but even of the faith that He had preached? In any case, the question that

¹ Pfeiderer, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

has to be answered is this: Supposing Christ's Gospel of the Fatherhood and indwelling of God to be true, why did Jesus, God's most devoted Son, not only suffer, but *so* suffer on the Cross; why did He not only die, but die in what seems, apart from an Evangelical interpretation, the blackness of darkness itself? Must there not have been some *reason*—some high, imperative Divine reason, for this? Must not Jesus have been here fulfilling some essential purpose of God? If we live in a world in which although men may act irrationally, Divine Reason rules; if there is a Divine righteous Will and Holy Love supreme over all things, must we not seek a rational, ethical, and evangelical interpretation of that Cross?

Our final interpretation will be given, and cannot but be given, in the light that shines within our own souls. According to our beliefs concerning God and man, concerning Sin and Righteousness, will our explanation of the Cross of Christ be found. Perhaps we have come to a time when each man must anew interpret that Cross for himself, when it is no longer possible simply to receive and hand on the interpretations that have been given, that are recorded in the New Testament, and that form the staple of our Evangelical theology. And may there not be a very deep and rich gain in this? Our faith is apt to become simply like an outward and earthly inheritance. We receive it, and hand it on; we think that we hold it; we live and die in it without question: but somehow it often seems not to *possess us*; it does not become a vital part of our own inward being, and so it has not the power that belonged to it of old, when it was fresh and new and vital—a living, personal element of the soul. In short, too often it is not *faith* at all, but a mere mechanical belief which meets certain supposed necessities but exerts no real influence over the heart, and gives no all-controlling practical

direction to the life. Evangelical religion needs, above all things, to get out of the dead form of mere assent to truths which were once alive in other men, but which have no real value for us unless they are alive in ourselves. We shall find our faith anew in something like its old power when we have to find it for ourselves through our own interpretation of the Cross. This by no means implies that we are to ignore the interpretation to which the Spirit led apostolic men. If it was indeed the Spirit of God that led them to it, we shall find it to be, in its abiding substance, everlastingly true. But it does mean that, instead of accepting such an interpretation without question, we must see it to be true for ourselves by the same Spirit's illumination. Nay, we would ask, Is it not an essential part of the work of Christ in relation to men and their salvation, that the significance of His death should be seen by men for themselves? Was it not to *this* that the Spirit of God first led men in the earliest Christian days? Was it not really in the spiritual interpretation of that death in its relation to sin that the needed work of the Spirit in their hearts was effected? The *forms* in which they represented to themselves and expressed what they were thus led to see would be those that were natural to them in their circumstances. These *forms* of thought might lose their value, but the substance of their faith would remain unchanged for ever.

CHAPTER III

THE FACT OF THE CROSS, AND THE GROUNDS OF FAITH

THERE is another way in which we may see the necessary implication of the Cross. *It is the pre-supposition of Christian experience.* Christianity is not a set of intellectual propositions to be believed, but a life-experience to be entered on, borne witness to, and sent onwards from generation to generation. Our faith does not rest primarily on anything that is written in books, but on what has been written in the hearts of men—those “living Epistles, known and read of all men.” It is *the Christian community*, not the books of the New Testament merely, that bears in itself and witnesses to the Gospel. We have “a great cloud of witnesses” testifying to that which is to be found through faith in God as revealed in the Cross of Christ. They declare that they have found through faith in that Cross a new life-experience; that they have, as it were, thus discovered a new inner world, which they maintain it is open to all in like manner to discover and to live in. Our faith rests primarily on that testimony, and is verified by our own experience, so that we can say to those who have testified unto us, “Now we believe, not because of your word; but we have heard Him ourselves, and *know* that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” There is nothing more wonderful on earth than this unanimous and identical Christian experience; and it is entered on always in the same way, through faith in the revelation of God’s forgiving

Love in the Cross of Christ. Here, then, is the real and immovable ground of faith—in the actual experience of living men and women, repeated in our own experience. No surer ground can be found by any possibility.

When Jesus rebuked Thomas after His Resurrection, it was precisely because he had refused to believe the testimony of his fellow-disciples. "Blessed are they," He said, "that have not seen and yet have believed." Thomas had nothing before him as a ground for faith but just this testimony, and we have the same ground for believing always with us. No Gospel or Epistle was then written; and to say that the reality of our Lord's sacrificial death and personal Resurrection depends on the authentication of the Gospel records which relate His sayings concerning His death and His appearances to His disciples, is really to act like Thomas, and, refusing to believe the testimony of those who declare that they have experienced the power of the Gospel and of the living Saviour, to go back to *sight*, or, at least, to the record of what others saw. A man is not justified in refusing to believe till all questions concerning those records of the Resurrection are settled beyond all manner of doubt. Is it asked, How do we know that the whole thing is not a matter of the imagination? We answer, How does a man know that some new country of which he is told has actual existence? or, How does he know that some professed cure is a real one? Is it not simply by testing it in his own experience? Faith thus leads to knowledge, and the knowledge thus gained becomes a ground for faith to others. "Yes," it may be replied, "but these are tangible things: a man, for example, can see and handle a medicine, but how is he to know that the Cross of Christ which he is asked to believe in, is a reality in the sense in which it is presented to him?" We answer that this is *part of the testimony* of the Christian community. If we can go behind it and see for ourselves

that it is believing without foundation, then by no means let us accept its testimony. But, even should we suppose that, if we could go behind the testimony of the Christian community, we might find it resting on nothing, we cannot so go behind it without great and almost impossible labour to ourselves, without such learning and research as may be wholly beyond our reach. It is far more reasonable and natural to believe the testimony of so many millions of our brethren, coming as it does from all Christian time and from men of every nation under heaven where the Gospel has been preached, at least so far as to make trial for ourselves of the reality of that which they declare.

Supposing, therefore, that it was possible to prove that none of these sayings attributed to Jesus respecting His death on the Cross was really uttered by Him, but that they are all the product of the interpretation given to His Cross by His disciples, that would not destroy our confidence in the Evangelical conception of the Cross; that would by no means prove that the Apostles and other Christians were wrong in the interpretation they put upon it. The supposition is an extreme one, for it can scarcely be thought possible that such a negative position can ever be established; and, as we shall yet see, we have the strongest reason for believing, even apart from the sayings in question, that Jesus regarded His Cross in the Evangelical light. But, accepting the supposition, would it destroy our faith? Does our faith rest primarily on these sayings of Jesus? We maintain that it *rests*, not on these sayings, but on a certain interpretation of the Cross itself made by the first disciples, but which it is as open to us to make as it was to them—an interpretation which has proved its validity in human experience, and, as we shall seek to show, an interpretation which we are compelled to make if we simply view Jesus Christ as the Fulfiller of the religion of His nation. It is true that

the first disciples may have been led to this interpretation by certain sayings of Jesus respecting His Cross, or by the light in which He placed it; but, once made, this interpretation remains, and is handed on from generation to generation, not by the witness of the written Gospels and Epistles merely, but also by that of those who have proved its validity in their own experience, and who invite us to make the same proof of it.

At the heart of this testimony is the fact that it is in some way through the Cross of Christ that the Divine Forgiveness effectually reaches men, and the Divine acceptance is extended to sinners, bringing them into conscious reconciliation with God and giving them the experience known as "Salvation." It is this that we need, and it is this that the Gospel of the Cross professes to bring to us. But our faith in this does not depend on anything merely recorded in the writings of the New Testament. We do not have the New Testament because men found salvation through it; it comes to us from men who had first found salvation, and solely *because* they had found it. Surely no one can seriously believe that, had the Gospels never been written, Christianity as a saving religion would have had no existence, or would have perished from off the earth. Certainly, the first hearers of the Gospel found salvation, because a certain interpretation of the Cross was preached to them as the culmination of the life of one who was regarded as the Son of God, or the Christ. But what was actually preached to men as a matter of saving faith, was a certain interpretation of the Cross which had been reached by Christ's Apostles under what they regarded as the tuition of the Divine Spirit, and which they believed the same Spirit could bring home to the conscience, reason, and heart of others. The first Christian preachers *testified* that they had found salvation through faith in the Gospel of the Cross as they presented it. With the consciousness of the same need

awakened, their hearers believed the testimony that was thus given them; they embraced the Saviour who was thus presented to them; and so believing, they entered into the same experience of salvation as belonged to their teachers.¹ It was through a certain interpretation of the Cross as a fact in history that salvation came to men, and, however much the first disciples may have been aided in reaching it by the sayings of Jesus, the interpretation itself does not depend on these sayings. It is not their presence or absence that makes it true or untrue. And this interpretation was given as a *testimony* delivered by the first preachers of the Gospel. No doubt, the Apostolic testimony was strengthened by appeals to the Old Testament and to the actual life and experience of Jesus, as realising what had been promised therein—probably also to actual sayings of Jesus respecting His Cross (although we have very few of such references recorded in the Epistles or in the records of the Apostles' preaching); but it was *the preaching of the Cross in its Evangelical interpretation* that convinced men of sin, and led them to the experience of salvation. It was the preaching of One who, in the manifestation of a Divine Love for men, "died for our sins," and through whose sacrifice God Himself drew nigh in forgiveness: it was the proclamation that all who would believe in the efficacy of this sacrificial death of Christ—all who, coming to God, would put faith in its sufficiency and in the Gospel proclamation—should find forgiveness, peace with God, and the spirit and power of a new and eternal life; that they

¹ "When Paul first preached to the Galatians, what did he tell them about Christ? Not about His miracles, nor about His teaching, but about His death. Christ crucified was vividly set forth to them, written large before their eyes; and then an influence, proceeding in some way from the heart of that great tragedy, came at once and took possession of them, and they felt themselves to be in active correspondence with the world above, where Christ, once crucified for them, now lived with God" (Professor Menzies, in Introduction to *The Earliest Gospel*, p. 7).

should be accepted as members of God's Kingdom, yea, become the sons and heirs of God. The essential testimony of the Apostles was that God sent all this to men through Christ and His Cross, and that they themselves had found it to be real in their own experience. They left it to the Spirit of God to work in their hearers the same sense of need, to lead them to the same faith, and to produce in them the same fruits of believing. They took up the Cross as the great word of God to men, *which God Himself should authenticate* in the experience of all who believed. Not only the New Testament, but all Christian history, proves how completely that word has been authenticated. Throughout all Christian time, wherever this Gospel has been preached, in every clime and in every nation, men and women have found salvation through believing. There is no more patent or more remarkable fact in the history of the world and in the experience of men, than this. Wherever the Gospel has gone and been received, whether by civilised races or by savage tribes, whether by learned men or by the most ignorant, whether by those of good moral character or by those most deeply sunk in vice, those who have believed the testimony declared to them have not only been brought to God and found a peace to which their conscience consented, but have been raised into a new and higher life, which in its essential character and attendant experience is *identical* all the world over. They have found that experience which is termed *salvation*; and it is the same thing, whether dwelling in the ignorant savage or in the cultivated savant. In nothing else do we see such a new moral unity created amongst men or such effects following. Would "belief in *anything*," or in something different, have done this for them? Certainly not. The witness of experience proves that, wherever the Gospel of the Cross is carried and received, it does for men these four things:—

1. It shows the reality and awfulness of sin; in the Spirit's hands, it convicts men of sin.

2. It reveals and gives men confidence in the forgiving Love of God, the heavenly Father; it is the supreme manifestation of the Love of God for sinful men, bringing them to God, removing the burden of their guilt, and giving them peace and joy through believing.

3. It becomes the power of a new life in their souls; it inspires them with a new spirit of Love to God and man.

4. It comforts and sustains them in the sorrows of life; it takes away the fear of death; it makes them conquerors over the world; and it gives them a blessed assurance of a place in God's eternal Kingdom.

It does all this, apart from any special *theory* of the Cross—under many different theories, indeed—only under that interpretation of it that sees Christ there, in some sense, dying on account of our sins and manifesting the Love of God for our salvation. These things we may regard, therefore, as expressing the essential meaning and purpose of the Cross.

The primary ground of the faith that has led to these results has been, in general, we repeat, simply *the testimony* that has been in God's name and in the name of personal experience declared. In the earliest days men were moved to faith before any complete or elaborate proof of the Divinity of the Apostolic message could be given them. It was only for those who *opposed* the testimony that such proof was needed, and of these there were many whom *no proof* could convince. It is the same still, wherever the missionary of the Cross proceeds. The Christian missionary of to-day, as truly as the first ambassadors of the

Cross, finds that the simple preaching of the Gospel is the power of God unto men's salvation. He does not go preaching a Theology, or trying to *prove* that Jesus Christ said certain things about His death; he simply tells the story of God's Love meeting man's need, and he finds that it is still divinely attested. Many thousands have believed and been saved who could not possibly understand any elaborate theory or proof of "the Atonement." The message delivered has appealed to a sense of need within themselves, and has met that need. They have, through believing, received the witness within themselves. The experience of the first Apostles in this respect is being repeated all over the world to-day, whether the preachers be apostles to the savages of New Guinea, to the denizens of south-east London, or of the slums of New York.

If the Cross be the great word of *God* to men, it *must* have something self-evidencing in it, something that shall so appeal to the nature of man, that the Spirit can bring it home with power to all men. That it does have this self-evidencing power, experience shows. Amongst ourselves, in a great assembly of those who are listening to the preaching of the Gospel, there are those present in every degree of knowledge concerning theories of the Atonement and the proofs of the things that are declared, many with no knowledge of these things at all, and with but little capacity for apprehending them were they laid before them. But the Spirit brings the truth home to all hearts alike, quite independently of these things. For those who have begun to doubt, or who are sceptical, Apologetics are necessary. And it is necessary that those who believe should be instructed and "built up in their most holy faith." But their faith itself "does not stand in the word of man, but in the power of God." It is not by Apologetics that the preacher of the Cross moves men, but by simply declaring the testimony of God and apply-

ing it to the conscience and the heart. Afterwards, the reason may ask questions and need to be satisfied. But there is a power of the Divine Spirit that accompanies (or is involved in) the preaching of the Cross; that is to say, really, a power of *Truth*, for "the Spirit *is* (in one aspect) the Truth," which can do what no Apologetics can effect.

It is, moreover, *the living person* who has himself experienced salvation who is the most efficient preacher of the Cross. Its proclamation comes with the greatest power from those whose own lives have been manifestly changed thereby; and such testimony is the sufficient ground for faith on the part of others. It is unreasonable to refuse to believe such testimony, so far at least as to act upon it for ourselves, and so put it to verification. It comes to us from all Christian time, from all parts of the world, from all kinds and conditions of men. It is unvarying in its character and undoubting in its confidence. What are *we* that we should thus doubt the testimony of our fellows? What right have we to consider ourselves so greatly superior to others? It is well not to be credulous, and to seek to be sure of the grounds of our faith. But with respect to other matters—scientific, geographical, social, political, and matters more nearly affecting our personal life—we are continually acting on testimony that is not more unanimous and decided, often much less so. Nor is it a bare testimony that we are asked to receive. We have the evidence of its truth in changed lives, in gladdened hearts, in saved souls. Those who give this testimony show in their spirit and life the reality of the cure which they say they have experienced. Some may fail to manifest it as we may think they should do, for there is much imperfection in our humanity, and it is no easy thing to be a true Christian; some may deceive themselves; some may even speak falsely; but these constitute but a fringe on the great body of the saved, who

through belief of the Gospel have become "clothed and in their right mind," and who by their spirit and life give evidence of the reality of their salvation. Were it a case of physical disease and its cure, who would hesitate to act on such testimony and evidence? What justification is there for refusing to act on similar testimony in spiritual matters? Dr. Dale in his book, *The Four Gospels and the Living Christ*, adduces the case of blind Bartimæus as an illustration of the impossibility of questions suggestive of doubt shaking the confidence of the man who has actually experienced salvation; but we may also adduce it as an illustration of the folly of refusing to act on the testimony that is given to the Gospel. He was blind, and could see neither Jesus as He came along, nor those who declared that they had been healed by the great Prophet. He had only their word for it—given, no doubt, in the presence of those who could have contradicted them if what they said was manifestly untrue. But suppose he had refused to believe their testimony, suppose he had halted and hesitated even till Jesus passed by, he would never have been cured. But he treated his fellow-men as he instinctively felt it to be natural to treat them,—as we all do treat our fellow-men with respect to other things,—and the result was that he, too, experienced the healing power of Christ, and could say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." When men feel the reality of their spiritual need (as Bartimæus felt that of his physical necessity), they *do*, without thought or question, act on the testimony, unless there be some very exceptional circumstances that hinder them; and, acting on it, they find in their own experience that the testimony of their brethren has been fully verified.

But, indeed, as already suggested, the testimony goes further than this. It is not the testimony of *man* merely, but what the Apostle called *the testimony of God*, and,

“if we believe the witness of man,” he says truly, “the witness of God is greater,” and should be still more readily received. The testimony of God is given in those effects which are produced in the experience of men through believing the Gospel. God Himself thus bears witness to its truth. We assume that we live in a moral world, and that it is the moral and spiritual order that is supreme—that in which we come most immediately into touch with God. Now mark what happens through faith in the Gospel. That which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls the “conscience of sin,” or that consciousness of guilt which presses so hard on the awakened conscience, and stands between the soul and God, is removed. To be without such a conscience of sin, where sin exists, would be a bad thing in a moral world, and bad for a moral being. To have that consciousness removed in a wrong way would be equally bad, for example, by closing the ear to the voice of conscience, or by some false trust in the general mercifulness of God. This, we may be certain, would lead to the deterioration of the moral nature. The man from whom this consciousness was so removed would become a worse man, not a better. Now, the wonderful thing about the Gospel is that through faith in the Cross this “conscience of sin” is removed, and in its stead a glad sense of reconciliation with God is created within the soul. And this is done, not only without injury to the moral nature, but there comes along with it a quickening, intensifying, and elevating of the highest elements in man. Those from whom this “conscience of sin” is taken are not made worse, but incomparably better, men and women; in fact, it is only then that they begin to live the true life of man. It is only the Gospel that can work this double marvel—giving peace to the sin-burdened conscience, and at the same time raising the sinner into newness of life; and in this we have the clear testimony of God Himself, the moral

Ruler of the world and the Author of our nature, to the truth of that conception of the Cross which can work this mighty work in men. God's purpose in the world must be a moral one, and we can have no clearer proof that anything is of God than the fact that it can at once meet the deepest needs of man and effect the highest Divine moral purpose. If there be any present voice of God at all, *here*, assuredly, it speaks to us.

Now, our present point is that all this is apart, not only from particular theories of the Cross, but from particular sayings, whether of our Lord or of His Apostles. No doubt, these often enter into the testimony that is given and on which we say faith is rightly based, and many of those who give the testimony would feel as if the very foundations of their faith were removed if these utterances were taken away from them. No doubt, it is important that our faith has these utterances to fall back upon. But the facts of Christian history show that there has been *from the first* such a steady, unbroken stream of testimony to the Evangelical interpretation of the Cross, quite apart from (although always in keeping with) such utterances as have been recorded in the Scriptures (which in large part really proceeded from Christian experience), as not only to justify us in believing, independently of all questions which criticism may raise respecting these utterances, but as to demand, on the most reasonable grounds, that we do believe, and so verify the testimony in our own experience. If this were not so, the "plain man" would find himself in a most undesirable position, for his faith would be placed at the mercy of critical experts; a new kind of Priesthood between man and God would be created, and whether there was a Gospel for the common man or not would depend on the determination of questions with which he knows himself altogether incompetent to deal.

SUMMARY

The Cross is thus a necessary implication, (1) because it is only the Evangelical interpretation of the Cross that can give us full confidence in Christ's personal teaching; (2) because it is only this that can give us a Gospel; (3) because it is only this that can explain the re-birth of Christ and the rise of Christianity after the Crucifixion of its Founder; and (4) because it is manifested in actual experience to be the power of God unto salvation to all who believe—testified to as such both by the actual experience and witness of men, and also by the testimony of God as the supreme moral Ruler of the Universe and the Author of our nature.

At the same time, the more detailed explanations of the Cross (if such there be) that are given in the Scriptures, and in particular our Lord's own view of the Cross in its relation to His accepted mission, are of the greatest importance for the instruction of believers, for the full satisfaction of the reason, for the repelling of attacks upon the faith and the removal of scepticism or doubt concerning it, for the gaining of a right understanding or true theory of the Cross, and thus for the maintenance of its full power. We shall therefore now turn to the consideration (in the first place) of the genuineness of our Lord's utterances concerning His Cross. From the ground that we have taken—of the non-dependence of the Evangelical interpretation of the Cross on any recorded sayings concerning it—it will be evident that we can approach the subject free from prejudice, and seeking only to know the truth.

PART II



THE REALITY OF OUR LORD'S REFERENCES TO HIS CROSS

CHAPTER I

THE GENUINENESS OF THE PARTICULAR SAYINGS RECORDED IN THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS

How did Jesus Christ Himself regard His death? Did He look forward to it as having a special significance for His mission; and did He ever refer to it in such terms as are recorded in the Gospels; or are those references all due to His disciples' after-beliefs? This is the question which we are now called on to consider. We do not approach it with the assumption that it is impossible that some of the sayings with respect to His death which are in the Gospels attributed to our Lord may be due to subsequent reflection on the part of His disciples. In the present state of our knowledge concerning the origin of our Gospels and their sources, and in view of the possibility that, although we give to their sources the earliest possible date, elements may have become embodied in them, derived not directly from Christ Himself, but from the consciousness of the believing community, it may be impossible to *prove* that the sayings ascribed to our Lord were all actually uttered by Him, especially in the form in which they have come down to us. But it may be equally impossible, on the other hand, to disprove it, and we may be able to show strong reasons for believing that Jesus did foresee and refer to His death as we have been accustomed to believe that He did. As already remarked, Professor Pfleiderer rejects the whole of these sayings. We shall endeavour to examine each saying impartially in the

light of the reasons urged by Dr. Pfleiderer for its rejection.

It is worthy of notice that almost the whole of the sayings ascribed to our Lord referring to His death occur in St. Mark's Gospel, which is now generally regarded as the oldest of the three Synoptic Gospels, and that the greater number of them is given by all the Evangelists. This fact alone does not, of course, establish their genuineness, because the critical theory is, that before any one of the Gospels assumed its present shape there was opportunity for the introduction of such passages into it, and even into its original sources, whether written or oral. Professor Schmiedel deems it "not unlikely" that Jesus "had in view the possibility of His death some considerable time before it came upon Him," and he does not dispute some of the references thereto in their original form (*Ency. Bibl.*, art. "Gospels," col. 1887).¹ But Professor Pfleiderer has undertaken to show the untrustworthiness of *all* such references by a special criticism of each one in detail. Let us ask how far he is successful in this endeavour. Professor Pfleiderer was a leader in the newer criticism of the Gospels, and facing what can be said by such an able critic against the genuineness of these sayings may perhaps strengthen our confidence in them. Apparently on the principle that such sayings as are contrary to the common Church-belief concerning Christ are the most certainly genuine ones, he begins his discussion of the sayings ascribed to Jesus with one of those found in St. Luke's Gospel, which he thinks furnishes a ground for the rejection of all the other sayings ascribed to Jesus with reference to His death—in their common acceptation at least. We shall follow the order in which he takes the sayings ascribed to our Lord.

¹ Hollmann regards it as certain that from Cæsarea Philippi, onward, Jesus did refer to His death as having a special significance (*Die Bedeutung des Todes Jesu*, etc., p. 11).

1. *Luke xxii. 37*: "For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, And He was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth Me hath fulfilment" (literally, "end"). Here the reference to chapter liii. of Isaiah is unmistakable, and it carries with it much more than is contained in the single sentence quoted. The passage, if genuine, shows us that our Lord in these last solemn moments viewed the necessity for His death in the light of what is said in that chapter of Isaiah concerning the Servant of Jehovah. But the passage is rejected by Professor Pfeiderer, and, along with it, all kindred passages. For what reason? Because it is preceded by these words in the 36th verse: "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet: and he that hath none, let him sell his cloke, and buy a sword." It is urged that this can only be understood as "an earnest and pressing summons (to the disciples) to provide themselves with weapons,"¹ and that, in so speaking, Jesus could only have had the design of defending Himself with arms against His enemies. It is true, indeed, that when He was told that they had already two swords, He said, "It is enough," and that two swords seem a very small furnishing of weapons of defence in view of such a resolution and of such an earnest injunction for every man to arm himself, even though he should have to sell his upper garment to get the means for it; but it is argued that the two swords would be sufficient for the present means of defence against "an attempt at assassination" (*op. cit.*, p. 180). The supposition, however, that He did not at this time look forward to His dying on the Cross, requires the omission, not from Luke only, but from all the Evangelists, of all sayings up to this time that point to the death of the Master. Luke, *e.g.*, tells us in this same chapter (ver. 14 ff.) how He ate the Passover with His disciples, saying to them, "With desire I have desired to eat this

¹ *Evolution and Theology*, p. 178.

Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And he received a cup, and when He had given thanks He said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come." The words that succeed in the 19th and 20th verses, viz., those of the "Lucan-Pauline" institution of the Lord's Supper, are strongly contested, and we shall refer to them again. But are the words that follow in the 21st verse, "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table. For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom He is betrayed!" to be wholly rejected also? These utterances are preserved by Mark (xiv. 21) and by Matthew (xxvi. 24) as well as by Luke, and there is every reason to regard them as genuine. Do they not carry in them their own evidence? They are necessary to the narrative; for we read that "they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing" (ver. 23). Was there never any such questioning among them as not only Luke but all the Evangelists record, including the Fourth Evangelist? (John xiii. 22). Then follows (ver. 24 f.) the account of the strife amongst them as to who should be the greatest in that Kingdom which the Master had just said was soon to come, as *they* understood the nature of it, and His promises of eating and drinking with Him at His table and of their sitting on thrones of judgment with Him, *the genuineness of which is assumed by Pfleiderer* (p. 181), and which we are told must be taken literally. Then we read of the trial that was to come to Peter (ver. 31 f.), and of his recovery. Peter says, "Lord, with Thee I am ready to go both to prison and death"; and Jesus tells him that the cock should not crow till he had denied Him thrice. Did Jesus never say to Peter

those words, which seem to be so well known to all the disciples? But if He did so speak, He must have had circumstances of shame before His mental vision as those in which He should speedily stand. And if so, how could He have spoken of defending Himself by force? But we have far too much to omit if we are to accept the suggestion made respecting this passage. Yet it is because of the context about the sword and the interpretation that is given to it that this and all other references are to be rejected. "The choice before which we stand is, that we must regard either the words in Luke about buying swords or the prophecies of Jesus' death as unhistorical" (Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, p. 181). We may well ask, How does that one saying—given by Luke only—and the interpretation that is thus given to it—come to stand so secure and certain that all else given, not on the authority of Luke only, but of all the three Evangelists, must go down before it? It is probably, as we have already suggested, because such a saying would be what Schmiedel calls "a stumbling-block" to the faith of the Church, and therefore would not have been preserved if not genuine. But this is assuming the correctness of the interpretation given to it. Moreover, such stumbling-blocks can only be found in some path of narration; and even though there may have been something in that saying which the disciples did not understand, this is no reason for rejecting the whole of that pathway of narration in which we find them travelling, but rather a ground of confidence in the truthfulness and fidelity of their report of what Jesus said.

But *what did the saying about the sword mean?* We agree with Professor Pfleiderer that the saying is not to be explained figuratively merely. What is true of the "purse" and "wallet" is true also of the "sword"; while, at the same time, a *merely* literal interpretation may be equally far from the truth. Whatever it means, we may safely say

that it cannot mean that our Lord ever thought of defending Himself by force, so that He should not die. Such an idea is altogether foreign to the thought of the Jesus of the Gospels. In the circumstances, such a thought could have occurred to none but an insane person. If it meant merely that His disciples were to defend Him from "secret assassination," there would be nothing contrary to the Evangelical conception in this; for it was not in that way that Jesus was to meet death. A secret assassination would not have been in keeping with His giving Himself "a sacrifice for sin." Taken thus, the saying would be, not a contradiction but a corroboration of that view of the Cross which we ascribe to our Lord. The simplest explanation of the passage, however, is that directly suggested by the context. *It is not of Himself, but of His disciples, that He is speaking.* It is not care or protection for Himself that He has in His mind, but *for them*, and it implies something serious as about to happen which will remove Him from them. When He sent them forth to preach, unprovided for and unprotected (ver. 35), they lacked nothing, and were safe because they were under the special protection of the Heavenly Father; but now there was a change: this was "the hour and power of darkness" (ver. 53). His enemies were to be suffered to proceed against Him—to do their worst; let His followers, therefore, now see to themselves and protect themselves as best they might: "For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, And He was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth Me hath end"—comes to its climax. Thus, what was in the mind of our Lord was *the very opposite* of the idea of forcible resistance on His part, and implies that which Professor Pfleiderer denies, viz., our Lord's distinct anticipation of His approaching death.

At the same time, while we take the words literally, it is evident that the disciples took them *too literally*. All that

our Lord meant was the general desirability of providing for and protecting themselves in the time then coming, as contrasted with that which had gone before.

It is held that our Lord's application to Himself of the words quoted from chapter liii. of Isaiah would be inconsistent with the command concerning the sword, since "he who prepares himself to resist hostile plots with arms cannot possibly have compared himself with the defenceless martyr who is led like a lamb to the slaughter, and is reckoned among the transgressors" (Pfleiderer, p. 181). But if Jesus, in the saying, referred not to Himself but to His disciples, this assertion falls. The word of resignation, "that which concerneth Me hath an end," is deemed equally out of keeping with the promise made a few lines before, of "dominion and seats upon thrones of judgment" (ver. 29). But if the Saviour's thought was that "the dominion and thrones of judgment"—in other words, the coming of the kingdom—should be *the result of His death*, the inconsistency disappears, and the whole passage stands in perfect harmony. Professor Pfleiderer's foundation stone is thus seen to crumble away.¹

2. Specially important, of course, is *the account of the institution of the Memorial Supper* (Mark xiv. 22–25; Matt. xxvi. 26–29; Luke xxii. 17–20). In each of the Synoptic Gospels, as they stand, we have what is acknowledged to be a very express reference to the sacrificial death of Christ as respects both His "body" and His "blood," and the

¹ It is encouraging to find that this reference of the saying to *the disciples*, instead of to Jesus Himself, has the support of Hollmann, whose tendency is to minimise Christ's references to the Old Testament. He remarks also that Professor Pfleiderer starts from the false hypothesis that Jesus in the 36th verse has given the disciples an instruction for their immediate behaviour, by which they could protect Him from murder. There was nothing for the immediate situation (Hollman, *op. cit.*, p. 72).

Professor Burkitt sees in the saying "a tender and melancholy playfulness," and regards it as "wholly alien from the kind of utterance which a Christian writer would invent for his Master (*The Gospel History and its Transmission*, pp. 140–142).

elements of the Last Supper are made the memorials of His death on our behalf. His death is specially described as the great sacrifice of the New Covenant, and this by our Lord Himself. But we are told that the sacrificial reference was derived from Paul, and formed no part of the original words of Jesus. "The words common to all three Gospels [the only words which have a right to stand in any of them], τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου, in fact contain *in themselves* no such reference at all, but admit, as is evident from 1 Cor. x. 17, an altogether different interpretation" (Pfleiderer, p. 182).

It would take us too far afield to attempt to discuss what words have a right to stand in the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper,¹ and, probably, when all was done we should have reached no completely satisfying result. But, accepting the words *admitted* to belong to these accounts, we would ask, *Why was there a last meal at all*, observed with such solemn impressiveness? Taking the only words that are allowed to stand, "This is My body," followed by the distribution of the bread to all the disciples, what did these words mean, if the action that accompanied them did not prefigure the giving up of His body for them on the Cross? They were eating the body of the Paschal Lamb that was slain as a prelude to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage; and surely the most natural significance of our Lord's words was that, as that Lamb was sacrificed for the deliverance of the Israelites, so should He be sacrificed for *their* deliverance. It is said that, apart from the words in question [the sacrificial words that are believed to have been added], "the delineation of this last meal in the Synoptic Gospels by no means gives the impression that thoughts of the impending tragedy or the pain of separation dominated the mood of the par-

¹ Hollmann cuts them down to, "This is My body: this is My blood" (p. 149).

ticipants. On the contrary, a tone of joyful confidence and hope in the early victorious decision of His cause expresses itself in the words of Jesus reported by all the Synoptists: "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" ("until the Kingdom of God shall come," Luke), and also in the words reported by Luke (xxii. 29 f.): "I appoint you a Kingdom," etc. (Pfleiderer, p. 183).

But in these first-quoted words (*regarded as genuine*, be it noted), there is clear evidence that this was for some reason a *Last Supper*, and that, if Jesus expected the speedy triumph of His Kingdom, there was *something about to happen which should lead to this triumph*. What was this? We cannot tell what may have been in the minds of the disciples; probably they expected the Kingdom to come in some way more consonant with their ideas concerning it; but there can be little question that it was His approaching death that was in Christ's own mind as that which should lead to the coming of the Kingdom. Without doubt, His language was jubilant, but it was with the joy of anticipated triumph *through the Cross*.

Coming back now to the admittedly genuine words, "This is My body," followed by the act of handing the broken bread to His disciples, what do such words and such an act imply? We are told that Paul changed their significance, but that in 1 Cor. x. 17 "Paul betrays an evident reminiscence of the *original* meaning of the words, 'This is My body,' in that the eating in common of the same bread that represents the body of Christ effects a fellowship of the life, a holy communion of those who eat of it, unites them with the mystic body of Christ, and thus binds them to Him and to one another in inseparable fidelity" (Pfleiderer, p. 186).

It is not very complimentary to Paul, nor very like what we know of him, to say that he *deliberately* changed the

meaning of the Lord's solemn utterance; but let us ask, Has such a remark any real foundation? Does not Paul everywhere teach that what united believers to Christ and made them members of His mystical body was their faith in His sacrificial death on their behalf? Can he mean something different here? If we turn to the passage referred to (1 Cor. x. 17), we shall see that, while the Apostle's argument is somewhat obscure, it is based on our union with Christ in His sacrificial body and blood. The subject he is dealing with is *sacrifice*—sacrifice offered to idols; and the point of his appeal is just this, that they who partake of such sacrifice have *communion* with the idols (the demons) to whom the sacrifice is offered. But we who partake in the elements that represent the sacrifice of Christ offered to God for us, have thereby communion with Christ and with one another. The cup is "the communion of His blood," and the bread "the communion of His body," uniting us all to Him and to one another in the one great sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. "Now," says Paul, "those heathen sacrifices unite their participants with the demons whom they worship, and you cannot be both united to them and to Christ." Therefore, "my beloved, flee from idolatry." Thus the very passage that is adduced as giving us a glimpse of the real meaning of the original words used by Jesus has no sense at all unless it points to *the sacrifice* of the Lord's body. It is throughout of a *communion through sacrifice* that Paul is speaking,—of a "feast upon sacrifice" indeed. If, then, we should allow nothing more to stand in the Gospel reports of the "last meal" than those words which it is acknowledged *must* stand, we see them to refer to the death of Christ as a sacrifice for men. They have no meaning otherwise. Even if we should regard them (with Pfeiderer) as primarily denoting the unity and fellowship of the disciples with Himself and with one another, that unity was only reached through a common faith in

Him and union with Him as a sacrifice. And this brings back to us those references to the Passover Lamb (to which also Paul refers in this same Epistle, chap. v. 8, "for our Passover also has been sacrificed, even Christ"), which are found not only in the Synoptists, but in the Fourth Gospel also. For the significance of that "body" of which they were to partake, given them in the bread while they were eating the Passover Lamb, was surely adumbrated to them by that Lamb, the place of which the body of Christ was to take for them to all time. If Christ did not mean to suggest this, His action was misleading.

3. *Mark xiv. 27 ; Matt. xxvi. 31.*—In immediate connection with the words at the Supper are those recorded by Mark and Matthew, in which Jesus told His disciples of the confusion that should soon befall them ; "for," He said, "it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." These words are rejected for the very insufficient reason that they are followed by the promise of Resurrection, "Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee," since the disciples had clearly no presentiment of the Resurrection, and the women actually made preparations for embalming the body of Christ (Pfleiderer, p. 187). This last passage concerning the Resurrection is therefore held to be certainly an addition. But, without discussing the validity of the saying about the Resurrection, we would ask, To *what* was it an addition? If the saying about the death be not genuine, how could there have been this addition made to it? If the saying about the death be genuine, we can understand the addition, not otherwise. Moreover, the saying is followed by that of Peter, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I," and by the warning addressed by Jesus to Peter in reply. Peter's saying must have been called forth by something that Jesus said, and if the utterance in question be genuine, we have a natural connection for

it.¹ With respect to the predictions of Resurrection, it may be well to remark that, as Schmiedel points out, the difficulty concerning the disciples, in view of their attitude on the occasion of the death of Christ, is met by another equally great, on the assumption that Jesus never in any form predicted His Resurrection, or if it was not implied in His utterances concerning His coming again. In that case, we should find it hard or impossible to understand why they were *restored* to their faith. For not even the visions which the critics who eliminate these sayings fall back on to account for that restoration would have been possible, had not the minds of the disciples been previously prepared by belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, which must have, both in His mind and in theirs, implied the ultimate triumph of His cause, and hence His resurrection, in some form (see *Ency. Bibl.*, ii., col. 1888).

4. The words in *Mark xiv.* 8 (see also *Matt.* xxvi. 12 and *John* xii. 7), spoken in connection with the anointing in Bethany, "She hath anointed My body aforehand for the burying," are rejected because they are followed by the statement: "Whosoever the Gospel (*Matt.* 'this,' strictly 'these good tidings') shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." "This last verse," it is said, "clearly betrays the reflection of the Evangelist, for τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, which in the mouth of Jesus was simply the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God, has here already received the later sense of an account of the life and death of the Messiah." Besides, it would be a strange proceeding to anticipate the embalming of a corpse by anointing the body of a man yet alive. Moreover, Luke gives no account of any such anointing, but gives instead an entirely different story (*vii.* 36-40), and, while John

¹ Hollmann maintains the genuineness of this saying, although he minimises its significance for the death of Christ (*op. cit.*, pp. 62-65).

again transfers the anointing to Bethany, he gives quite another version of it, reporting the saying as, "Suffer her to keep it against the day of My burying" (xii. 7), which plainly indicates a desire on His part to escape from an embarrassing situation. The "historical kernel" of the story is probably an anointing with oil to the Messiahship, which was in after-days felt to be inappropriate to the heavenly Kingship of Christ (Pfleiderer, pp. 188, 189). That there are difficulties connected with these narratives, and that difficulties with reference to our Lord's saying, as reported, were felt by the later Evangelists, cannot be denied. But is not the fact that such difficulties were felt, a reason for believing in the genuineness of the saying rather than otherwise? Was it not just the strangeness of the incident and of our Lord's use of it that led to those variations in John and to his attempt to explain it, as well as to its total omission on the part of Luke? The phrase "the Gospel" was certainly used by Jesus for the good news of the Kingdom which He Himself proclaimed and which He sent others to preach (see Mark i. 15, viii. 35, x. 29, xiii. 10); and the supposition that this would exclude the narration of any facts relating to the Messiah—the Lord of that Kingdom—or the story of its establishment through His life and work, has no sure ground in fact. That the Evangelists should put these strange words into the mouth of Jesus in such a connection, without any historical basis for them, is extremely improbable.

5. *Mark xii. 1-12; Matt. xxi. 33-46; Luke xx. 9-18.*—The Parable of the Unfaithful Husbandmen, spoken in the last days of our Lord at Jerusalem, contains, it is said, "in the form in which it has come down to us, an evident prophecy of the death of the Messiah Jesus, brought about by the wickedness of the godless leaders of the people or the hierarchy." It is "an allegorical representation of the fate of the Jewish theocracy, which, through its sinning

against the Divine messengers (the Prophets), and at last against the Son, has drawn upon itself the rejection by Heaven; while the Son of God, cast out by the hierarchy, is made the corner-stone of a new building of God." But in the real parables of Jesus, it is said, "historical events are not allegorised, but general truths are vividly presented through ever-recurring events of daily life." As it stands, the parable is "a product of primitive Christian theology, not an authentic report of a polemical discourse of Jesus" (Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, ii. 406).¹

Of course it is always open for any one to suggest such an explanation, and it may be impossible to disprove it. But the connection in which the parable stands compels the recognition of a parable in some form aimed at the corrupt hierarchy (so Pfeiderer himself, p. 190, and Schmiedel). It was, according to the Evangelists, this very parable that so enraged the hierarchy that they sought to lay hold on Jesus, and indeed it was such sayings that directly led to His death. It is surely not improbable that when He came to the last grapple with His enemies, and foresaw the certainty of His death at their hands, He should speak to them in such a strain, warning them of what they were about to do, and telling them what should be the result in the judgment of God. Was it not just His use of the term "the Son" here, or the "beloved Son" as Mark gives it, that directly led to the question, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed?" and to the condemnation of Jesus on the ground of His appropriation to Himself of such a title? Nowhere else does Jesus, so far as the Synoptists carry us, *publicly* apply to Himself the title "*the Son*." At any rate, there is no ground shown for regarding the parable in its present form as a composition of His disciples after their Lord's death, instead of a genuine utterance by Himself.

6. *Mark* x. 45; *Matt.* xx. 28.—"For verily the Son of

¹ (Pfeiderer, *op cit*, pp. 190, 191).

Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." These important words, it is said, cannot be rationalised "so that they shall convey the idea that Jesus consecrated His life, devoted it in service, to the salvation of many; but what is meant is the abandonment of His life to death as an atoning sacrifice, which should purchase the salvation of many (namely, all believers) from death." But just because this is held to be the meaning of the saying, it must be rejected; for this is "Pauline Theology," created by dogmatic reflection on the death of Jesus, "in order to remove the offence which this death had in the eyes of the Jews." This "Apologetic reflection" found "a welcome solution of the problem in the thought, which was prefigured in Isaiah liii., and was also current in the Pharisaic Theology, that the innocent sufferings of the righteous martyr have the Divine purpose to serve as a guilt-offering for the payment and abolition of sins," but which was "quite remote from the circle of thought of Jesus Himself," in which there was no room for "a substitutional atoning sacrifice and its imputation to the believers." Jesus taught a purely "ethical doctrine of Salvation," He "everywhere made forgiveness of sins dependent upon the penitent and humble disposition of men, together with their own willingness to forgive, without anywhere intimating that it presupposed as a condition a preceding propitiation of God by a substitutional atonement." The Parable of the Prodigal Son shows this. Moreover, Luke has "a parallel to a different purport" in chap. xxii. 27, where Jesus spoke of "an active life in the service of His disciples." "Without doubt, *this* is the original form of the saying." Such "dogmatic reflection on the death of Jesus as a means of redemption is found, apart from this passage, only once in the Synoptic Gospels," viz., in the words at the institution of the Supper, which have already been rejected (Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-194).

The *meaning* of this saying will come up again for consideration, along with the question whether the idea of a redemption through the sacrifice of Himself was "altogether foreign to the thought of Jesus." This is the very question at issue, and it will not do to *assume* the negative. Meanwhile we would remark, (1) that the passage in Luke which is supposed to give the original form of the saying is no true parallel, but refers to quite a different occasion. The strife concerning precedence has in Luke a natural origin in their sitting down with Jesus at the table. Our Lord's words as there given are also in harmony with what is recorded in John xiii. 3-5 : (2) that it is surely strange, if the disciples' minds were so full of "dogmatic reflection" on the death of Christ, and if they deemed it so important to remove *in this manner* the stumbling-block of the Cross, that they should only (as Pfeiderer holds) on two occasions have introduced these reflections into their narratives. Surely, if they felt free to introduce them once or twice and to put deliberately into the mouth of Jesus words which He never really uttered,—thus strangely deceiving *themselves*, to begin with,—they might have ventured to do so oftener, and somewhat more effectively : and (3) that it does not follow that the words "to give His life a ransom for many" necessarily imply *that conception* of "a substitutional atonement" which Professor Pfeiderer attributes to Paul, or anything out of keeping with the rest of the teaching of Jesus. As Dr. Menzies remarks in his Notes on St. Mark's Gospel, "there are three circles of ideas with any of which the words 'ransom for many' may possibly be connected,"—the purchase-money given for the freedom of a slave ; the later Jewish thought, of merit through the suffering and death of saints ; and the sacrificial idea (*The Earliest Gospel*, p. 201). We are by no means, therefore, shut up to that which is described as "Pauline" for an

understanding of these words of our Lord. It will be interesting if we add Schmiedel's remarks on this—"a passage of such great importance." He says, "It can be accepted as genuine if Jesus spoke of His life as a ransom in no other sense than that in which He did so at the Last Supper—*i.e.*, as an offering, not for sin, but for the immunity of His followers after the manner of the Passover Lamb in Egypt, or for ratification of their covenant with God, as in Gen. xv. 10, 17; Jer. xxxiv. 18; Ex. xxiv. 1-8, and if He did so at a date not long before His death. Otherwise, the doubt will have to be expressed, that it comes from the Pauline Theology" (*Ency. Bibl.*, ii. col. 1887).¹

7. *Mark viii. 31f., ix. 31, x. 32f., and parallels.*—There are, finally (with Dr. Pfeiderer), "those three detailed prophecies of the Passion which the Synoptic Gospels report at the close of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and during His journey to Jerusalem." According to all the Evangelists, Jesus, after Peter's confession of Him as the Christ at Cæsarea Philippi, began to speak openly of His death, saying (according to Mark viii. 31) "that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again," and this was, according to Mark and Luke, repeated twice on the journey towards Jerusalem. That Jesus *did*, from this time at least, anticipate that violent end which the bitter and determined opposition of the scribes and Pharisees indicated as only too probable—a probability which He could scarcely have ignored—has been generally acknowledged; but those sayings also Dr. Pfeiderer dismisses

¹ Hollmann argues strongly for the authenticity of this "cardinal saying," giving quite a different meaning to it from that which Professor Pfeiderer says is the only possible one (*op. cit.*, p. 99 ff.).

as "the products of the Apologetic reflection of the Church," based on certain passages of the Old Testament (*op. cit.*, p. 194 f.) The chief ground for this conclusion is that "the entire deportment of the disciples at and after the death of Jesus shows most clearly that they were in no way prepared for this catastrophe, and that they had no presentiment of a Resurrection of the crucified one so soon to be expected"; which was impossible "if Jesus had repeatedly spoken in such unambiguous terms of the Resurrection on the third day." We have already seen so far the reply to this. And it is to be noted here that the first of these sayings led to the well-known protest of Peter, with Jesus' remarkable answer to the impulsive disciple, and to that solemn saying to all the people about the need of taking up the cross, which had certain important historical consequences. Is all this to be rejected, as it must be, if we are to reject the intimation of His death at this time?

Schmiedel, as we have seen, holds the references to the Resurrection as probable, and also deems it "not unlikely" that Jesus "had in view the possibility of His death some considerable time before it came upon Him." "But," he adds, "the very precise predictions of it, with their various details, are open to the suspicion that they took shape at a later date, in accordance with the facts of history; and least of all is it credible that Jesus should have put forth such a prediction directly after Peter's confession. This confession must have been one of the supreme moments in the joyous consciousness of Jesus—the discovery that He was finding recognition as the Messiah and was winning His battle. Suffering and death are the very opposite of all that is looked for in the Jewish Messiah, and of what Jesus at that moment could have looked forward to for Himself" (*Ency. Bibl.*, ii. col. 1887.)¹

¹ Hollmann, on the contrary, holds that it was almost necessary, if

But if Jesus did not think of Himself after the fashion of the popular Jewish Messiah, but as that Messiah of the Prophets who should reach his triumph *only* through suffering, this reasoning falls, and the joyous consciousness, which doubtless belonged to Jesus in that "supreme moment," is seen to be in perfect harmony with His prediction of suffering. It was necessary that Jesus should tell His disciples *what kind of Christ* He was, and what fate was most probably in store for Him on earth.

Mark tells us, with reference to the second announcement of His suffering, that the disciples "did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask Him" (ix. 32; see also ix. 10); and Luke, on the occasion of a similar announcement, says that "they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them that they should not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask Him" (Luke ix. 45). If these statements are to be taken at all, they must be taken seriously; and if the disciples *did not understand* those sayings of Jesus about His death and Resurrection, how could they have been "prepared for these events"? That the two disciples whom Jesus joined in the way to Emmaus were censured only for not believing the Prophets, and not also upbraided for disbelief of His own utterances, does not by any means imply (as Professor Pfleiderer suggests) that He had never told them Himself of His sufferings; for *His own belief* concerning the necessity for those sufferings was based primarily on the sayings of the Prophets.

The third saying, as given by Mark (and Matthew), stands in such a natural connection and is introduced in such a way as to strongly suggest its truthfulness (Mark x. 32). It was just after the rich young man had gone

Jesus was not to mislead His disciples, that He should have then spoken to them as He did (*op. cit.*, p. 11).

away sorrowful because unable to make the great renunciation, and through this experience Jesus had had brought home to Him the difficulty of the salvation of many if something *more* were not done for them. It was *then*, "as they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem," with Jesus Himself going before them, that the announcement of His approaching sufferings was made. There was something in the Master's mood and manner very striking. He was marching on before them with resolute step towards Jerusalem, the stronghold of His foes, "and they were amazed, and they that followed were afraid." Surely we have in this a genuine historical note. "And (then) He took again the Twelve, and began to tell them the things that were to happen to Him,"—at that Jerusalem whither they were going. Soon after this follows also the saying about the "Son of Man giving His life a ransom for many." We do not deny that we may have amplifications and repetitions of some of these sayings; but we seem here to have a real historical fact.

Dr. Pfleiderer derives a confirmation of his results, and indeed a reason, for rejecting all passages referring to our Lord's death where the term "the Son of Man" appears, from an argument by which he seeks to show that that term (the Son of Man) was never used by Jesus of Himself. His argument will be best dealt with when we come to consider the use of the term "the Son of Man" by our Lord. At present we only remark that the question whether Jesus spoke of His death does not depend on whether He called Himself the Son of Man. If it could be proved that He did not so designate Himself, He may still have said *in some form* what the Evangelists make Him say of the Son of Man. But surely it is, on the face of it, extremely improbable that a title always in these Gospels attributed to Christ, and used *only by Himself*

occurring above eighty times in the Gospels—in the fourth as well as in the first three—was never used by Him of Himself at all. And the improbability is increased when we never find it applied to Him anywhere outside the Gospels, save once by the martyr Stephen. If Jesus never used it of Himself, why should it occur so often here, and *never*, with the single exception mentioned, in the writings of those who are said to have adopted it for Him, and who use it so freely in the Gospels? ¹ Whereas, if Jesus alone used it to describe Himself, we can easily understand why the disciples refrained from using it of Him. In view of the exalted Christ, it might seem too lowly a title whereby to designate Him whom they had come to look upon as the Son of God Most High.

As far as we have gone, we have not seen any good reason adduced for surrendering a single saying of Jesus respecting His suffering and death. When it is said that “the Church could help itself over the stumbling-block of the death of the Messiah on the Cross, only by thinking of this dark fate as planned in the counsel of God, and hence also prophesied by Jesus, the confidant of God” (Pfleiderer, *op. cit.* p. 196), we have it acknowledged that it was this interpretation of the Cross that enabled the Church to recover its faith. Whether this interpretation was warranted or not we shall consider further on; but to ask us to believe that those first Christians got over this stumbling-block of the Cross thus, and then put sayings into the mouth of Jesus concerning His death, which they *must have known* He never uttered (if they were thereby getting over a stumbling-block), is to present us with something which is psychologically very improbable, if not altogether impossible. It implies that they deceived themselves with their eyes wide

¹ In Rev. i. 13 and xiv. 14 we have the phrase in Daniel, “one like unto a Son of Man,” used to describe the risen Lord.

open. The Cross was a stumbling-block to them, and they only got over it by forcing themselves to believe that Jesus said things about it which they knew very well He never did say. This was surely such imbecility as we see no sign of in what is credibly recorded concerning the first Christians. We do not mean to assert that Jesus must have spoken of His death and Resurrection in the precise terms which we find in these Gospels (although nothing has been adduced to disprove this), but that He did give certain intimations of His death which recurred to the minds of His disciples, especially after they had had a little time for reflection, is a conclusion which is not shaken in the least degree by anything that has been advanced to the contrary.

The strongest support to Professor Pfeiderer's position—the only support, in our opinion (although it is but a seeming one)—is derived from the demeanour and action of Jesus when He had reached Jerusalem. "The journey to Jerusalem," says Professor Pfeiderer, "has no longer the purpose of dying there as a sacrifice for the sin of the world, but of contending and conquering, of attacking the hierarchy in its stronghold and overthrowing it, in order to take seriously the dominion of God in Israel. The solemn entry into Jerusalem amidst the acclamations of the people, and that energetic interference with the official observances of religion, the purification of the Temple, are no longer incidental episodes of the mystic drama of redemption, but are decisive deeds of the God-inspired prophet and reformer, who sets himself for the accomplishment on the earth of the will of His Father in Heaven" (Pfeiderer, pp. 201, 202). We agree that everything done by Jesus was *real*; there could be no mere acting of a part. He certainly *meant* that they should accept Him as the Messiah, and came, as He then did, to give them a definite opportunity

of receiving Him. "No longer dare Jesus delay making it clear to the nation itself that the promised Messiah has appeared, and that it is not to await any other. But this could only take place at Jerusalem, where the nation collected as such was to be met" (Hausrath, *New Testament Times* (E. T.), i. 232). And in order so to present Himself to them, He adapted Himself to an accepted Messianic prediction of such a nature as was in harmony with His own spirit, and assumed such Messianic functions as were wholly in keeping with His mission. Yet He could not conceal from Himself the certainty that He should be rejected. "It could not be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem." It might be further urged that His struggle and prayer in Gethsemane show that, while Jesus accepted the necessity for His death, it had always been only if *such was the will of His Father in heaven*. It might be said that, although it had sometimes appeared to Him to be an absolute necessity,—at which times He gave utterance to such sayings as the Evangelists have recorded,—at other times it may have seemed that another course of action—such as He seems to have adopted when He entered Jerusalem, and, boldly charging His enemies, in His Father's name cleared the Temple of unholy traffickers—might be owned of God and crowned with success; and He must leave no means untried. It might be said that His prayer in Gethsemane shows that up to the last He *hoped* that the bitter cup of the Cross might not be necessary, and that it was only when fully convinced that it was His Father's unalterable will He should drink it, that He finally accepted it. It is surely better thus to explain the difficulty than to resort to the hypothesis of endless insertions in the Gospel history, and to make our Lord finish His course in disappointment and despair. But we do not adopt that line of argument, because it seems abundantly attested that long previous to

His coming to Jerusalem our Lord had made up His mind that He must die, and had insisted on the necessity for His disciples facing death in the same spirit, and thus saving their lives for the Kingdom of God. We cannot believe that He ever wavered in this conviction, and we are therefore constrained to interpret the struggle in Gethsemane as having reference, not to the mere fact of His death, but to what might be involved in it. His entry into Jerusalem, therefore, and action there, we regard as having been deemed necessary in order to give the people and their ecclesiastical representatives an opportunity of coming to a definite decision concerning Him. Of course, if they had received Him, His death would not have taken place.

But there are other references by our Lord to His death recorded in the Evangelists; indeed they so run through the Gospel narratives that it would seem quite destructive of their veracity to entirely remove them.

One of these, recorded by all three Evangelists in almost identical terms and in the same connection, is placed apparently in an early period of His ministry. It is the saying in Mark ii. 19, 20 (Matt. ix. 15; Luke v. 34, 35), when His disciples were reproached for not fasting like the disciples of John and the Pharisees: "Can the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But days will come (so in all), when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day." It is possible, however, that this saying belongs to a later period, and that it has been placed in connection with the feast that followed the call of Levi, because Jesus was on that occasion reproached for eating with publicans and sinners. On the other hand, Jesus must have had the thought of His death in His own mind some time before He spoke of it openly.

After the Transfiguration (Mark ix. 9; Matt. xvii. 9), "as they were coming down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of Man should have risen again from the dead." Mark adds that "they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean." Then followed, according to Mark and Matthew, the natural question in such a connection: "How is it that the scribes say that Elijah must first come?"—to which He replied that "Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things," but that he had come, and "they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, even as it is written of him." Mark says (ver. 12) that He told them also "how it is written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things, and be set at nought"; Matthew: "Even so shall the Son of Man also suffer of them." Luke gives us a similar saying a little later, *after* the casting out of the demon, which followed the descent from the Mount of Transfiguration, while Mark and Matthew place it *before* this. Luke ix. 44: "But while they were all marvelling at the things which He did, He said unto His disciples, Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying." It seems undeniable that shortly after the Transfiguration Jesus made an intimation to His disciples of His coming suffering, which, after what they had seen on the mount, deeply impressed them, and was impossible for them to understand. The motive of Luke's transposition of the saying is evident from the fact that, according to his belief, the very subject of the conversation of Moses and Elijah with Christ on the mount was the "decease (or departure) which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 31).

We omit the saying given in Matt. xii. 40 about the sign of the prophet Jonah, because, in the light of the other Evangelists, what Matthew gives is probably rather an interpretation of what Jesus *intended* by the sign of Jonah than His actual words (see Mark viii. 12; Luke xi. 29, 30, 32).

Luke (xii. 50) gives us the suggestive saying: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" So also Mark x. 38, where He asks the sons of Zebedee, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

Luke also gives (xiii. 31-33) the answer to those Pharisees who tried to get Jesus to leave Galilee by saying that Herod would kill Him; "Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and *the third (day) I am perfected*. Howbeit I must go on My way to-day and to-morrow and the (day) following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." It should not be Herod that should kill Him, but they themselves. This saying has surely the stamp of originality. It is followed by the lamentation over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!"—ending with the words, "Ye shall not see Me (as the Messiah), until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Luke tells us further, that at the last Passover Feast Jesus said to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you *before I suffer*: for I say unto you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (Luke xxii. 15, 16).

All three Evangelists give us this saying, uttered on the same occasion: "For the Son of Man goeth even as it is written (Luke, 'determined') of Him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed!" (Mark xiv. 21; Matt. xxvi. 24; Luke xxii. 22).

It is hardly possible to believe that *all* these sayings, many of them evidently belonging to the document or tradition, or documents and traditions, on which the Gospels in their present form were founded, have been inserted *post eventum*. But, as we have already remarked and shall now show in detail, it is impossible that Jesus should have drawn His conceptions of His mission and of the Kingdom of God from the source from which He derived them, without coming to believe or having it suggested to Him, that His death was involved in the fulfilment of His mission, and necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER II

APART FROM PARTICULAR SAYINGS

WE have seen that no good reason is adduced for the rejection of those sayings which are attributed by the Evangelists to Jesus respecting His death. We now proceed to show that, apart from these particular sayings, we have the strongest reasons for believing that Jesus did look forward to and regard His death in the light of a sacrifice that was necessary in order to the complete fulfilment of His mission of the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

1. Let us ask, first, *How did the Cross come in the experience of Jesus, and how was its coming viewed by Him*—apart from these particular sayings that are questioned? Historically, and considered in a purely human aspect, our Lord met His death as a martyr to Truth and Righteousness, and in fidelity to the mission that was given Him. His Crucifixion was an enormous crime; He fell a victim to the evil passions of men whose highest welfare He sought, into whose hands He was betrayed, and who rested not till He was crucified. It came to Him in the course of His faithful fulfilment of the mission that He believed was committed to Him by God. He made no forcible resistance to His enemies, but, although conscious that deliverance was possible, He suffered Himself to be taken and put to death as something that had come to Him in the will of God, His Father. But He must have believed that there was some good *reason* why He should have thus to die.

2. The acceptance of the Cross was therefore, secondly, and on Christ's part, *an act of supreme obedience to the will of God*; in accepting it, He felt that He was bowing to the holy and unalterable will of His Father. He found the Cross lying, as it were, athwart what was to Him the path of duty in which He was called to walk by God, and He would not go past it, nor let it become a stumbling-block, but took it up and went forward, bearing His Cross, ready to die on it if need were. Whether or not He actually said to Peter, when that anxious disciple sought to dissuade Him, "Thou savourest not of the things that be of God, but of the things that be of man," this certainly expresses His own thought in relation to the Cross, as we find it definitely uttered in Gethsemane: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." But, again, He must have felt convinced that there was some adequate reason in the mind of God why that Cross should be so accepted.

3. It was, thirdly, an illustration of a great principle that applied to all. The sayings about the necessity of dying in order to live, and of the need for every man who would be His disciple taking up his own cross, occur too frequently (and in the Fourth Gospel as well as in the first three) not to have originated with Jesus. His own acceptance of the Cross was therefore an illustration of the great principle of the sacrifice of self, in order to do the will of God and to find the highest life. But mere sacrifice of self without a *reason* for it could not be called for, nor could it be acceptable to God.

4. He must have believed that His acceptance of the Cross was a necessary part of His own Divinely given mission. That mission was to establish the Kingdom of God in the world. His whole endeavour had been directed towards this end, and it is impossible to believe that at the

close it was otherwise with Him. We may say confidently, therefore (even apart from particular sayings), that *He died in order to bring in the Kingdom of God*. We may go further, and say that He believed His death on the Cross to be *necessary* for this—that only through this sacrifice of Himself the Kingdom of God could come.

5. What was it that led Him to believe in this necessity for His death in order to the accomplishment of His mission, and that made Him so certain, at the last at any rate, that it formed an essential part of the purpose of God concerning Him? We have evidence that, as the crisis approached, He shrank from that which was before Him, and prayed that, if possible, the cup might pass from Him. Yet He accepted it because of His conviction that it was the Heavenly Father's will for Him in the fulfilment of His mission, and that through His acceptance of it the Kingdom of God would come. Whence did He draw such a conception of the Christ and of His work as embraced the necessity for this sacrifice of Himself? The particular sayings that are questioned tell us plainly. "The Son of Man goeth, *even as it is written of Him*"; "the things concerning Me have an end"; "this is done, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled," etc. We are not to assume here that these sayings are genuine; but it is *no assumption* to maintain that our Lord must have viewed Himself and His mission, including the necessity for His death in order to its fulfilment, *in the light of those Old Testament Scriptures*, which were to Him the Word of God, speaking of Himself and of His mission. The idea of a Christ Who comes to His work as if it were something self-originated, with a perfectly new doctrine concerning God and His Kingdom and a conception of His mission that owes little or nothing to the Old Testament, is an entirely unfounded one. The only Christ that we have any knowledge of is one Who was, on the human side, the highest product of the religion of

Israel, and who regarded Himself as its Divinely appointed *Fulfiller*. Whether He deemed Himself the Christ and the Lord of the Kingdom or not, He certainly regarded His work to be the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. On almost every page of the Gospels, as they stand, there is evidence of the high place which the Old Testament Scriptures held, not only in the minds of the Evangelists but in the mind of Christ Himself. Perhaps no detailed proof of this is necessary; yet the subject is of so great importance for the understanding of the work of Christ, and the attempt has been so strenuously made to reduce to a minimum Christ's references to the Old Testament Scriptures, that it may be well to deal with it somewhat fully; because, if Jesus drew His conception of His mission from the Old Testament, there can be little doubt as to how He regarded His death.

If there is any truth in the narratives of "the temptation," they show us in Christ a soul nurtured on the Old Testament. He repels the attacks of the adversary by quoting what is "written." In St. Luke's Gospel He is represented as opening His mission at Nazareth by applying to Himself a passage from those grand prophecies which speak of the redemption that was to come to Israel (and which contain the picture of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, Isa. xl.—lxvi.), and as declaring that the fulfilment of these prophecies had come to them in Himself (Luke iv. 17-21). The Gospels of Matthew and Luke contain many references to the Old Testament on Christ's part. In particular, both give His answer to John's inquiry whether He was the Christ, in which He referred him to certain passages in Isaiah, including Isa. lxi. 1, "the Gospel is preached to the poor," and perhaps xlii. 7 (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 22). But if we confine ourselves to that Gospel which is regarded as the earliest and most original—the

short Gospel of Mark—we shall find it to be full of quotations from and reflections of, the Old Testament on our Lord's own part.¹

The very opening words of His ministry, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark i. 15), point directly back to Old Testament Prophecy. What time? Surely that indicated by the Prophets. What Kingdom of God? Surely that promised in the Old Testament prophecies—that Kingdom to set up which was the great Divine Event—in which all the hopes of His people were centred, the announcement of the coming of which would be the gladdest of glad tidings to all who "looked for redemption in Israel." In His command to the leper whom He healed, "Go, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing what Moses commanded" (Mark i. 24 with Lev. xiv. 3 f.), we see his familiarity with the ordinances of the Old Testament. His ready justification of His disciples' action on the Sabbath day, by reference to "what David did when Abiathar was High Priest," reveals His familiar knowledge of these Scriptures (Mark ii. 25, 26 with 1 Sam. xxi. 6 and Exod. xxix. 32, 33; Lev. xxiv. 9). The hardness of heart of those to whom He preached is explained to His mind by what is said in the Scriptures, "that they may see and see, yet not perceive; and hear and hear, yet not understand. Lest haply they should turn again, and be forgiven" (Mark iv. 12 with Isa. vi. 9, 10). His comparisons of the Kingdom to growing grain, till at the proper time the husbandman has the sickle

¹ For convenience' sake, we shall follow in the main Dr. Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*, in which those Old Testament references, etc., are italicised. These Old Testament references and reflections are often pointed to as indicating the influences under which the Evangelists wrote; but may they not as truly indicate those under which the Master Himself thought and spoke? The quotations are in the main from the Septuagint Version, with a few variations. See Allen, *Expository Times*, xii. 187.

put in immediately, because the harvest has arrived; and to the grain of mustard seed growing up and throwing out great branches so that *the birds of the air can rest under its shadow*, both reflect the Old Testament (Mark iv. 29, 32, with Joel iii. 13; Ezek. xvii. 22, 23). So does His injunction to the man whom He healed, to go home and "relate to them all that the Lord hath done for thee" (v. 19 with Ps. lxvi. 16), also the picture of the "sheep without a Shepherd" (vi. 34 with Exek. xxxiv. 5, 6, etc.). His rebuke of the Pharisees with reference to cleansings was directly drawn from the prophecies of Isaiah (vii. 6, 7, with Isa. xxix. 13). Again, He quotes to them the words of Moses, "Honour thy father and mother," etc. (vii. 10 with Deut. v. 16 or Exod. xx. 12); and the clause following, "and he that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death," is from Exod. xxi. 17. Once more, the words of Isaiah appear in His rebuke to His disciples (viii. 18 with Isa. vi. 9). Again, He tells them how "Elijah indeed comes first and *restores* all" (ix. 12 with Mal. iv. 5, 6). In His picture of the doom of those who are excluded from God's Kingdom He quotes the solemn words of the conclusion of the second portion of Isaiah: "Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched"; indeed, it may be truly said that His whole representation of that doom is founded thereon (ix. 48 with Isa. lxvi. 24). In His teaching concerning divorce He not only refers to what Moses permitted, but goes back from this to the original thought of God in His creation as contained in Genesis (x. 4-9 with Deut. xxiv. 1; Gen. i. 27 or v. 2, ii. 23, 24). To the man who asks what he is to do to inherit eternal life He answers by quoting the Commandments (Mark x. 19; and He meets His disciples' astonishment by quoting an Old Testament saying, "*Anything* is possible with God" (x. 27 with Gen. xviii. 14, etc.). He rides into Jerusalem expressly to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah (xi. 1 f. with

Zech. ix. 9), and He rebukes the traffickers in the Temple by quoting the Word of God, "Is it not written (the expression testifying to His estimation of the Scriptures), *My House shall be called a house of prayer for all nations ; but ye have made it a den of robbers,*" combining two separate Old Testament passages (xi. 17 with Isa. lvi. 7 ; Jer. vii. 11). The Parable of the Vineyard is in part drawn from the Old Testament (Mark xii. 1 f. with Isa. v. 1 f., etc.), and the lesson He meant it to convey is introduced thus : "Have ye not read this Scripture—

"The stone which the builders rejected,
This is made the head of the corner.
This is the doing of the Lord,
And in our eyes it is marvellous."

(xii. 10, 11 with Ps. cxviii. 22, 23). So He answers the doubts of the Sadducees concerning the Resurrection by reproaching them for their ignorance of the Scripture : "Have ye not read in the Book of Moses at the place of the Bush, that God spoke to him?" etc. (xii. 26 with Exod. iii. 6). The question, What is the chief commandment? He answered by bringing together Deut. vi. 4, 5, and Lev. xix. 18, here again showing His intimate knowledge and close study of the Scriptures (Mark xii. 30, 31). Then we find Him asking the Sadducees that question which they were unable to answer : "How is it that the scribes say the Christ is *David's Son*? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord," etc. (Mark xii. 36, with Ps. cx. 1), which shows how deeply He had pondered the Old Testament teaching concerning the Messiah. In the Eschatological passage in chapter xiii. there are frequent quotations from or allusions to the Old Testament. And, as the end draws nigh, His mind seems steeped in the Old Testament. He speaks of His betrayer as *one who is eating with Me* (xiv. 18 with Ps. xli. 9). Up to this point there is surely no reason to refuse credence to

these sayings as genuine utterances of Jesus. And if so, why should we cast out those that follow? He had already spoken of giving His life as a *ransom* for many (x. 45 with many Old Testament passages). Now He says, "The Son of man goes, *even as it is written of Him*" (xiv. 21). He joins devoutly in the Old Testament observance of the Passover, and compares His body to that of the Paschal Lamb. His "blood that is poured out for many is *the Covenant Blood*" (xiv. 24 with Exod. xxiv. 8; Jer. xxxi. 31). He sings with His disciples Old Testament Psalms as hymns of praise (xiv. 26). He tells them that they should all be scattered, "since *it is written*, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad" (xiv. 27 with Zech. xiii. 7, changing "smite" into "I will smite"). In His agony in Gethsemane He uses Biblical language: "*My soul is very sorrowful*, even to death" (xiv. 34 with Ps. cxvi. 3; Judg. xvi. 16; Isa. liii. 3, 4, etc.); and His one explanation of all that happens after is, "However, it is *in fulfilment of the Scriptures*" (xiv. 49). To the solemn adjuration of the High Priest He answered that He was "*the Christ*," a designation which carried in it the fulfilment of the whole Old Testament; and He added, in words derived from the Book of Daniel concerning the Christ (as He applied them), "And you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (xiv. 62 with Dan. vii. 13). Even His cry in His agony on the Cross was in the words of Scripture: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (xv. 34 with Ps. xxii. 1).

We may add that the very name by which he constantly designated Himself, "The Son of Man," was derived from the Old Testament. We have seen no reason to doubt that these are genuine utterances of our Lord (Who was surely as familiar with the Old Testament as any of His disciples); and if we see all this in one short Gospel,

giving us only (as all the Gospels do), to quote the words of Schmiedel, "a *précis* of our Lord's teaching," we are prepared to believe that the fuller references to the Old Testament in Matthew and Luke (apart from His disciples' applications of prophecy) truly represent the relation of Christ thereto. It was to Him that *Word of God* which He came to fulfil in its higher spiritual significance.

But, even apart from those *recorded* references to the Old Testament Scriptures, it is impossible for us to think of Jesus in relation to His mission in any intelligible way, without believing that these Scriptures were not only familiar, but the very Word of God to Him and His constant guide. They were such to every pious Israelite. Jesus certainly regarded Himself as a religious teacher of God's people, and deemed it His mission to proclaim and usher in the long-promised Kingdom of God. But *the very idea of that Kingdom* was derived from the Old Testament, and it was simply impossible for Jesus to appear as a Teacher of Israel and the Fulfiller of its religious Ideal and Hopes, without basing Himself on the Scriptures. Without supreme reliance on that which was to all the people the Word of God, He could never have undertaken such a task. And it would have been equally impossible for Him to have studied the prophecies of the Old Testament without having His attention arrested by what they contained respecting that "Servant of God," through whom, and, above all, through whose sufferings, the Divine purpose should be accomplished.

It is true that there were other representations of the course of the Messiah as that of a conquering King, on which the attention of the people was wholly centred; but it was just the distinction of Jesus that He saw deeper both into what the Kingdom of God really was, and into what might be necessary to bring it to a sinful people. Those representations of the suffering Servant of God which the

scribes and people ignored, would at least suggest the possible necessity for the suffering and death of the Messiah, and He would find many kindred representations in the Scriptures. We have already seen evidence of His familiarity with those prophecies, and it is now very generally recognised that Jesus derived His conception of the association of suffering and death with His work chiefly from those in Isaiah.

The question is not whether, in the popular expectation or in the teaching of the Rabbis of His day, a suffering Messiah was looked for. We know that Jesus did not follow these Rabbis, and that He found Himself in many respects in opposition to the scribes of His time. It was precisely His originality and insight into the Scriptures that distinguished Him from the teachers of His day, so that the people said, "He spake with authority, and not as the scribes." We have every reason to believe that it was His fresh and independent study of the Word of God from boyhood till He was "about thirty years of age" that enabled Him to see the true nature of God's Kingdom, and what was necessary to bring it in, and that led Him to come forward so confidently to His high mission. At the same time, the Talmud and Targums show that the association of suffering with the Messiah was not so entirely foreign to Jewish thought as it is often represented as being. As Schürer remarks, "it cannot be disputed that, in the second century after Christ, the idea of a suffering Messiah, and indeed of a Messiah suffering as an atonement for human sin, was, at least in certain circles, a familiar one." We can scarcely suppose that such a conception was *entirely* derived from Christian sources. Schürer adds: "*In this respect, a thought which in itself was quite current in Rabbinic Judaism, was applied to the Messiah, namely, the thought that the perfectly righteous man not only fulfils all the commandments, but also atones by suffer-*

ings for sins that may have been committed, and *that the overplus suffering of the righteous man* is of service to others." This at least shows that, as Schürer says, "the idea of a suffering Messiah is conceivable on the soil of Judaism, although it did not become the prevailing view of Judaism." In the "official" Targum of Jonathan, Isaiah liii. is applied to the Messiah, but not the verses that describe the suffering of the Servant of God.¹ But do not the words of Simeon in Luke ii. 35, "yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul," indicate the expectation of the suffering of the Messiah on the part of the pious circles of Israelites when our Lord was born?

The criticism we are dealing with maintains that the whole of these sayings respecting the death of Christ are due to the after-reflection of His disciples in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures. This is its stronghold, so to speak. But the question we should like to ask is, Why should these *disciples* thus value and study the Old Testament, and interpret their Master's death in the light of its teaching, while the Master Himself laid no stress on it, or at least did not interpret His experience in the light of it? Why should they, *after the event*, come so readily to explain His death in the light of Old Testament prophecy, and Jesus Himself never perceive its significance in that same light, not even when His death appeared to be im-

¹ Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. ii. vol. ii. 186. The passages referred to the Messiah in the Targums and Talmud are given in Appendix to Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, ii. 710-741. The difficulty is the uncertainty as to *dates*. Professor Paterson, in his article on "Sacrifice" in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv., regards it as one of the ideas "most satisfactorily vouched for" by the material collected by *Weber* (the date of which is sometimes uncertain), that a high "degree of efficacy, attached to the sufferings and death of the righteous as foreshadowed in Isaiah liii. The death of the righteous is expressly compared in point of efficacy to the Day of Atonement (Pesikta, 174b)." See also 2 Mac. vii. 37; 4 Mac. iv. 29).

minent, and when He felt what was before Him so keenly, as is witnessed to us by Gethsemane? If the disciples could so employ and learn from the Old Testament, why could not the Master Himself do so? He was a devout child of Israel, and could not ignore the Book which every pious Israelite regarded as the Word of God. They, it will be said, were anxious to find some explanation of the death of their Master such as should dispel the darkness that seemed to surround the Cross, and sustain or restore their own faith and hope, and they found what they sought in the Old Testament references to a suffering Messiah. But what was it that suggested this to them, and that gave them such confidence in the explanation, if it was so obscure that the Master Himself had not seen it or made any reference whatever to it? If *they* were anxious to find an explanation *after* the event, was not Jesus Himself equally anxious for such an explanation when He saw—as He could not fail to do—His death certainly approaching? On the theory of His mission adopted by this criticism, His death must have seemed a terrible contradiction to His hopes; He must have anxiously asked Himself its meaning, and earnestly searched the Scriptures to find it. Surely an explanation of what seemed so dark and contradictory was as much needed by our Lord Himself *before* His death as ever it was by His disciples after it. Why, then, should that explanation that was so open to them have been wholly hidden from Him? We are here asked to believe what is entirely incredible; for the Master, in His knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, stood far above His disciples. The only way in which this conclusion can be evaded is to assume the very point at issue, viz., that Jesus did not at any time look forward to the probability of suffering and death. But even Strauss, who regards it as probable that Jesus applied to Himself the general features of the *Teacher* and *Servant* of Jehovah in Isaiah, holds

it "possible" that, while at first Jesus clung most, or exclusively, to the idea of the patient *Teacher*, "the more among His own people He met with want of sympathy and with resistance, the more He saw the hatred of the upper ranks excited against Him, the more occasion had He to adopt into the conception of the Messiah He had formed the peculiar characteristics in Isaiah l., lii., liii., after the example of the earlier Prophets (Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xviii. 33), to prepare not only Himself, but His followers, to submit to the utmost oppression, condemnation, and execution. He might also have adopted from Isaiah liii. the contemplation of surrendering His life 'a ransom for many' (Matt. xxviii.), and of His death as an atoning sacrifice. For these ideas in their general form approached very nearly to the Jewish range of thought" (Strauss, *New Life of Jesus* (E.T.), i. 319). It may be replied that criticism has advanced since Strauss' time; but it has not reached any position to make the words just quoted less reasonable, and, as we have already seen, Schmiedel holds it as not improbable that Jesus did, towards the end at least, look forward thus to His death.¹

But if Jesus applied to Himself those descriptions in Isaiah of the suffering Servant of God, *this really carries everything that we contend for*. We are led back to the old belief that it was originally to *Him* that His disciples owed that explanation of the Cross that changed the gloom of earth into the glory of heaven. Why then, it will be asked, were the disciples so disconcerted and even dismayed

¹ See also Professor Carpenter, *The Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 218, 253, etc. (1st ed.). Professor Bruce, in his article "Jesus" in *Ency. Bibl.*, says that "by elective affinity Jesus would choose the purest and loftiest elements in prophetic delineations and out of these form His Messianic idea," and that, "from certain indications in the Gospels, it may be inferred that Deutero-Isaiah was the chief source of His conception."

The latest Criticism as represented by Schweitzer agrees with this. See note at end of next chapter.

when the event came to pass? We answer that it was just for the reason given by the Gospels. Nurtured in the *popular* ideas concerning a conquering Messiah "Who should restore the Kingdom to Israel," and bring, in an external sense, "redemption to Israel," they could not realise that the Christ must not only suffer (as He might do in the course of His conflict), but actually *die* in apparent defeat; they could not understand it; they did not believe that Jesus really meant *this* in the words which He had spoken to them. It had been hard, perhaps, even for Christ to *assure* Himself of this necessity, and it depended, even for Him, on whether the religious representatives of the nation should receive Him or not. Yet it had often seemed inevitable that He should, in some form, meet with a violent death, and He had therefore sought to prepare them for such an issue. But it was only when, the first excitement past, they "remembered the words He had spoken to them," and, turning with new earnestness to the Old Testament, found (in the light of the event) the necessity for the death of the Christ so clearly taught, that they came to see that need for meeting the Cross which the Master Himself had looked forward to. It is therefore really *to Christ Himself* that we owe that conception of the Cross which so transfigured it that, when once His disciples were enabled to enter into their Master's view of His death, it brought again His religion from the dead, alive with a new and deathless life.

It is disputed whether Jesus regarded Himself as the Christ; but it cannot be disputed that He deemed it His mission to bring in the Kingdom of God. And it was simply impossible for Him, with the Old Testament in His hand—His Bible, in truth—and relying on it, as we know He did, irrespective of the teaching of Rabbis and Scribes, and in the light of the teaching of His actual experience—waiting ever as He did on indications of the Father's will—

not to believe that, before the Kingdom could be established, the suffering, and even the death, of Him who stood forth as "the Servant of God" with that work committed to His hand might be necessary. The great prophecy in chapter liii. of Isaiah alone would convince Him of this necessity and in that prophecy, especially where it is said that he should "make his soul an offering for sin," and be "numbered amongst the transgressors," and "bear the sin of many," He would find sufficient not only to show the need for His death, but to create that fear and dread which were evinced in Gethsemane.¹ Quite apart, therefore, from those particular sayings that are questioned, we cannot but believe that, viewing His mission, as He unquestionably did, in the light of Old Testament prophecy, He must have come to regard His sacrificial death as a necessity.

Certain critics would leave us comparatively little in the Gospels absolutely certain as a foundation. But accepting simply the bare fact that Jesus regarded Himself as He Who should bring in God's Kingdom (which fact *must* be accepted, or else all attempts to know anything about Christ be abandoned)—we see that He must have looked on His death, not only as something in spite of which God would make Him triumphant, but as something which might be destined to play an essential part in His mission. We must believe that the Evangelical interpretation of the Cross to which the disciples were led, under the influence of Old Testament teaching, was first of all, under the same influence, put upon it by our Lord Himself.

There is further evidence that our Lord anticipated His death, in the fact that He always taught that the Kingdom of God should be established only at "*the coming of the Son of Man.*" That did not mean the earthly advent of the

¹ Hollmann's treatment of Christ's relation to Isaiah liii. will be noticed in the next chapter.

Christ, or "the Son of Man," but His *second*, heavenly coming in the power of God. He never taught that the Kingdom should be set up in the time then present, but only when He came again "in His own glory and power, and in the glory of the Father" (see Matt. xvi. 27 f., xxvi. 29, 64; also x. 33, xix. 28 f.). That Christ did "prophecy His return with the clouds of heaven and the like," is held by Schmiedel to be "quite intelligible, and even necessary, if He held Himself to be the Messiah: in such a case, it would be impossible for Him to believe that God would allow Him and His work to go to ruin through the persecution of His enemies" (*Ency. Bibl.*, ii., col. 1887). But although in the Spirit the Father was ever near Him, this coming again implied His leaving this world through the gate of death in order that He might go to the Father to *receive* the Kingdom and return in its power and glory. His death, therefore, must have held a necessary place in relation to the fulfilment of His mission, as He Himself conceived it. It was probably, in this view of it, that He reconciled in His own mind the two apparently opposing representations of the Messiah in the Old Testament. The passage in Daniel, which gave the favourite picture of the Messiah to the people, spoke of His coming in the clouds of heaven—forth from God to establish the Kingdom; while there were *other* representations which indicated the suffering and death of the Messiah. How could the Christ come forth from God in power and glory, without having first passed through death? Thus the death that would come through the people's rejection of Him was in nowise contradictory to these other representations of the Messiah's course.

Again, have we not the witness of the continuous observance of *the Lord's Supper* by the Christian Church to the fact of its institution by Christ as a memorial of His death? To say that it was Paul who gave the observance

this significance, is to affirm what is extremely improbable ; for *Paul never had such influence in the Church as a whole—least of all, in the earliest Church*—as to be able to establish any such rite ; and the *Didache*, Justin, and Ignatius bear witness to its observance outside the range of Pauline influence.

We have, further, *the independent testimony of Paul* to the fact that Jesus represented His death in the Evangelic manner. The earliest *written* narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper is that given by Paul in chapter xi. of 1 Corinthians, 23 f. : " For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread ; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, This is My body, which is (broken) for you ; this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the New Covenant in My blood : this do, as oft as ye drink (it), in remembrance of Me." And again he says to these same Corinthians (chap. xv. 3) : " For I delivered unto you first of all that which *I also received*, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." Here Paul expressly disclaims the origination of that view of the meaning of Christ's death which some critics ascribe to him. It was something, he says, that he had *received*—either from the risen Lord Himself or from His original Apostles. Supposing that in the first mentioned passage the words ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου are rightly rendered "*of the Lord*" in the sense of indirect communication, rather than "*from the Lord*" (directly), as many have taken them—the reference being, as it probably is in the last quoted passage, to the Christian tradition—we should have here distinct evidence of *a tradition* concerning the sacrificial death of Christ, which was "delivered" by the Apostles and "received" by their converts as something most certain

and authoritative; and we should thus have *direct testimony* as to our Lord's teaching respecting His death, while the first Christian disciples and apostles still lived, at the hands of one who had "received" this tradition immediately from those who were with the Lord. But there is no *necessity* for so interpreting Paul's words in 1 Cor. xi. 23, and we *may* have in them the assertion of a revelation received from Christ Himself. There is another passage which would lead us so to regard Paul's saying here. In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians he solemnly affirms that he was an apostle, "not from men, neither through (a) man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead"; and with respect to his Gospel—that "Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world"—he says, "*Neither did I receive it from (a) man, nor was I taught it, but through revelation of Jesus Christ*" (Gal. i. 12). We have here such a strong assertion of the *direct* teaching of Jesus Christ as makes us feel that we are probably right in interpreting the reference in chapter xi. of 1st Corinthians in the same way. Not that Paul received the *words* of the institution by direct revelation (which, according to some, would only suggest illusion on his part), but that he received a directly created conviction of the *occasion* and *significance* of the institution. Paul never pretended to receive revelations in human words from Christ. In any case, we have in these sayings—in 1st Corinthians and in Galatians—direct testimony of the strongest kind to the character of our Lord's own teaching concerning His death, quite apart from the sayings that are recorded in the Gospels.

To this may be added that we have, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 20), what is probably a direct reference to the words of Jesus at the Supper. Speaking of the action of Moses at the institution of the Sinaitic Covenant,

the author of this Epistle says that he sprinkled with the blood both the Book itself and the people, saying, "This is the Blood of the Covenant," etc. He here deviates from both the original Hebrew and the Septuagint in saying "This is" instead of "*Behold* the blood," etc., which, as Professor Bruce remarks, sounds like an echo of the words spoken by Jesus when instituting the Last Supper (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 361). Alford mentions (*Greek Testament*) that this suggestion was first made by Böhme.

We conclude, therefore, that even apart from the particular sayings recorded in the Gospels, we have every reason for believing that Jesus looked forward to and spoke of His death as holding a most important place in the fulfilment of His mission.

PART III



THE CROSS AS VIEWED BY CHRIST

CHAPTER I

IN THE LIGHT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

HAVING seen the certainty that our Lord did refer to His death in such terms as are recorded by the Evangelists, let us now approach the interpretation of the Cross, by asking more particularly how the Cross was viewed by our Lord Himself. Let us inquire, in the first place, how our Lord would regard His mission and the necessity for His suffering in order to its fulfilment in the light of those Old Testament Scriptures which, in their spiritual significance, were His guide, and the fulfilment of which He regarded as His mission. Here we must have in view not merely isolated passages or supposed direct predictions of the Person and work of Christ, but the indications that are given of the true vocation of that Israel whose supreme Representative Jesus regarded Himself as being, and of the manner of the fulfilment, through Israel, of the great Divine purpose in the world—the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

That our Lord drew at least many of His conceptions from the Old Testament cannot be doubted. Wendt, in his analysis of the teaching of Jesus, says that He based His assurance of His Messiahship and the necessity of His sufferings on the fact that the Old Testament promises found their fulfilment in Him (referring to Mark ix. 12, xii. 10 f. 36 f., xiv. 21, 27, 49; Luke xxii. 37). But indeed, as we have already seen, it was from the Old Testament that He received *the very idea* of a Kingdom

of God that should be set up "in the latter days," and of a Messiah who should usher it in. This idea of a Kingdom that God Himself should set up in Israel, and ultimately, through Israel, in the world, is the ruling idea of the Old Testament. It reached its highest expression in the later Prophets, although we may find the germ of the conception in earlier writings. It lay implicitly in the idea of the Theocracy and of the relation in which Israel stood to Jehovah as His Covenant people. But it seemed long in finding its realisation. Israel was far from being the true people of God, and the prospect of the coming of the Kingdom, even in that nation, seemed often an almost hopeless one. But the Prophets held fast to Jehovah's purpose and faithfulness, and saw all that Israel experienced, and, in particular, all that it suffered, in the light of this Divine purpose that could not fail. The later Prophets, however, felt convinced that the order of things that then ruled in Israel could never bring in the Kingdom. After the discipline of suffering there must be a new Dispensation of Grace, in which God Himself would bring in His Kingdom, through the experience of His forgiving love and the direct exertion of a new spiritual power. In a passage found in Jer. xxxi. 31-34 (although perhaps later than the time of that prophet), we find it represented under the form of a *new* Covenant that God would make with His people (see also Ezek. xi. 19, xxxvi. 25-27; Isa. xlii. 6, xliv. 21-23, xlix. 8, lix. 21, etc.), and the picture is also given of a righteous Branch or Sprout from the root of David, who should bring redemption to Israel and be the Prince and Shepherd of His people. Sometimes it is the Kingdom as founded by Jehovah Himself that is predominant; at other times it is the Messianic King, through whom the Kingdom is to be established. But it is in the writings bound up with those of Isaiah—the Book of Consolations, beginning with chapter xl.—that the most specific

descriptions of the Kingdom are given. Its establishment is there represented as '*the result of the fidelity of the suffering "Servant of Jehovah."*' Here we have two things which, as respects the fulness of expression given to them, may be called *new*: the Redemption is not for Israel only, but through the Servant of Jehovah it should go forth into the whole earth, and, in connection with this, the element of *suffering* is brought very prominently into view—it is only through the *suffering* of God's faithful Servant that the Divine purpose can be fulfilled and the Kingdom of God established. It was all to be brought about in the fulfilment of Israel's vocation of God. That vocation, as it made itself felt in the later prophetic consciousness, was to be the people through whom the knowledge of God (and the true destiny of man implied therein) should come to the world at large—through whom, in other words, the Kingdom of God should be established. The appearance of Christ was *in* Israel as the ripened fruit of God's working in that nation, and His personal work was the consummation of that which God had been all along working out in and through that people, so that, after its fulfilment by Christ, Israel's special function in the world ceased: "there was no longer Jew and Gentile, but one new man in Christ Jesus."

But the fulfilment of Israel's mission was through suffering on the part of that nation. In Israel, God was creating a sense of sin and of estrangement from Himself with the misery resulting therefrom, in order that not Israel only, but the world, might be brought into reconciliation with Himself, and find their true life in Him and His Kingdom. This was the meaning of that continued suffering which seemed so strange after the promises of restoration and their partial fulfilment. As Hegel says well in his *Philosophy of History*, "It is this which gives to the Jewish people their world-historical importance and

weight; for from this state of mind arose that higher phase in which Spirit came to absolute self-consciousness—passing from that alien form of being which is its discord and pain, and mirroring itself in its own essence. The state of feeling in question we find expressed most purely and beautifully in the Psalms of David and in the Prophets; the chief burden of whose utterances is the thirst of the soul after God, its profound sorrow for its transgressions, and the desire for righteousness and holiness” (p. 333, E.T.). Now, Jesus Christ was conscious of Himself as He in Whom that which God was working out in Israel was to reach its fulfilment. He knew Himself as the true Messianic Head of the nation. In Him that yearning for God reached its perfection, and in His freedom from sin and sense of union with the Father it found its satisfaction. But the work on behalf of the sinful in the nation, and of the world at large, had also to find its completion in Himself, and He naturally, therefore, set Himself to the fulfilment of the great and true mission of Israel, forgotten by the scribes and ignored in the external and self-enclosed religion of the time. “Despised and rejected” of the nation though He was, He had set before Himself the high task of realising the Ideal of the people of God in the light of the teaching of those Prophets and Psalmists who had entered most deeply into the mind of God concerning Israel, and as that teaching should find its completion or fulfilment in His own consciousness, through the experience that should come to Him in the leading of His Father’s Providence.

In considering the teaching of the later Prophets concerning the mission of Israel and its fulfilment as it bears on the Cross, we naturally fix our attention chiefly on that utterance concerning the suffering “Servant of Jehovah” that is found in Deutero-Isaiah, which we believe was to

Christ's own mind (along with Psalm xxii.) the dominant representation of what should be required of the Messiah in order to establish the Kingdom of God. The question of the precise meaning of "The Servant of Jehovah" has been often discussed, but its applicability to Christ in His work does not depend on the answer. We do not imagine that the writer of Isa. lii. 13–liii. had Jesus Christ and His sufferings directly before him. Such a conception of prophecy has been discredited, and is psychologically improbable. That by "the Servant of Jehovah," in the prophecies commencing with Isaiah xl., the *nation* is primarily intended, is, we think, plain, although in certain passages there seems to be more of a personal reference, as if to "a maltreated Prophet"; and in chapter liii. the Servant is certainly distinguished from Israel in general; for Israel as a whole (as well as the nations) finds its redemption through him. Perhaps we may say that he represents the *true* Israel, especially the faithful, active, teaching, and suffering Israel, finding (most probably) its complete expression in a *person* who realises in himself the Ideal, and does that which was needed to bring in the Kingdom of God. The prophet's view of the necessity for and meaning of the suffering of God's Servant in the fulfilment of his Divine mission is the result of reflection on the meaning of the suffering of the faithful in Israel. Chapters lii. 13–liii. are probably from the hand of a much later prophet than the author of the main body of the restoration prophecies, which begin with chapter xl., and they give expression to convictions begotten by the *continued* suffering of the faithful and the delay of the Kingdom, notwithstanding the glorious promises made through earlier prophets. Suffering is the great redeeming agency, and more suffering—such suffering as only the one who is pictured in chapter liii. could bear—is needed before the triumph can be gained. Professor Cheyne thinks that a similar view of

the meaning of suffering had been reached by the author of the Book of Job, namely, that God must have appointed Job's sufferings for the good of those who were great transgressors, and that the passage in Isaiah is largely modelled on the original Book of Job. "Such, at any rate, was his view (that of the author of the Prophecy) respecting his own hero, the Servant of Jehovah. He does not deny that the Servant looked forward to his ultimate justification in public, but he evidently thinks that the really influential motive with the Servant was his ability through his sufferings to redeem the people from sin" (*Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, p. 162). It should be carefully noted that it was not Israel only who should be so redeemed, but *the nations*, even the Gentiles, and (although this is disputed by many) the passage in Isaiah liii. seems to be put into *their* mouth as their confession and acknowledgment of this (including, however, Israel also by implication); beginning, as in the margin of the R.V., ver. 1: "Who (hath) believed that which we (have) heard, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (rather, "to whom *was* the arm of the Lord revealed," or "bared"). As it was said in the close of chapter lii.: "Behold, My Servant shall prosper (marg. R.V.), he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Like as many were astonished at Thee (or at him), so shall he sprinkle (rather, startle) many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him (in astonishment): for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand (or perceive)." This, referring primarily to the gracious outcome of the suffering of the nation that they had so greatly despised, certainly sets forth that which found its supreme exemplification in the outcome of the sufferings of Christ, as men like Paul among the Israelites, and many from among the Gentiles, were led to confess, after having despised Him on account of His lowly appear-

ance and because of what He suffered. Vers. 4-6 of chapter liii. exactly express the feeling with which many from amongst the "nations," as well as many in Israel, came to regard Him and His sufferings, whether led to it by such passages as this or not: "Surely He hath borne *our* griefs (or sicknesses), and carried *our* sorrows (or pains; "*our* pains did He take for His burden"); while we accounted Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace (needful to procure peace for us) was upon *Him*; and with His stripes *we* are healed. All we like sheep had gone astray; we had turned every one to his own way, and the Lord laid (or made to light) on Him the iniquity (or the guilt) of us all."

What is of special interest in relation to the work of Christ is that it is *only through his sacrifice of himself "for sin,"* in obedience to that which was laid on him by the Lord, that the Servant of Jehovah should accomplish his mission and gain the victory. Ver. 10: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; He made him sick; when Thou shalt make his soul (or, margin of R.V., "when his soul shall make") an offering for sin (literally "a guilt-offering, '*ā-shām*"),¹ he shall see his (*a*) seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure (or purpose) of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many (rather, as in margin of R.V., "make many righteous"): and he shall bear their iniquities" (or, "and their guilt he takes for his load"—Dr. G. A. Smith). Professor Cheyne in the Polychrome Bible (Isaiah) translates—

¹ "If his life should offer a guilt-offering" (Dr. Smith). "If (or when) his soul should present 'a guilt-offering.' The subject is ambiguous, but on every ground it is better to suppose that 'his soul' is subject than that Jehovah is addressed" (Skinner's *Isaiah*, *in loc.*).

"If he were to makê himself an offering for guilt,
 He would see a posterity, he would prolong his days,
 And the pleasure of JHVH would prosper in his hands.

He would deliver from anguish his soul,
 Would cause him to see light to the full.
 With knowledge thereof My Servant will interpose for many,
 And take up the load of their iniquities."

Then follows the statement of the Servant's triumph and honour, couched in the language of the time: "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; *because* he poured out his soul (Cheyne, "his life-blood") unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors (or rebels); yet he bare the sin of many, and made (or maketh) intercession for the transgressors" (or rebellious). Cheyne renders—

"While it was he who had borne the sin of many,
 And for the rebellious had interposed."

According to Luke's Gospel, our Lord, on the eve of His betrayal, quoted from this passage, "he shall be numbered with the transgressors"; and, with this prophecy before Him, we can have little doubt concerning the interpretation of the Cross in the mind of Christ Himself. With what power would this representation come to His mind, especially towards the end of His course—"If *he were to make his soul an offering for sin*" (or equivalent words).¹ Yes, He was ready even to do this, *should it be God's will*. It was *this* that was needed. His gracious *preaching* of the Kingdom of God had not availed to establish it; His *call* to men, even though backed by the most touching representations of God as the Loving Father, had fallen for the most part on unheeding ears; those who

¹ That there are variations in the text of the LXX here, as we have it, is of no moment. Justin Martyr quotes it as in the Hebrew, and in the Jewish synagogues the Hebrew Scriptures were rendered into Aramaic.

ought to have welcomed Him had set themselves in direct opposition to Him, and were seeking His death. Was His work to fail, then? Was His holy mission to come to nothing? Had He mistaken His calling? Had His faith been in vain? No: there was something more yet to be done—something *to which alone* the victory was promised: “when He should make His soul an offering for sin,” when He should “pour out His soul unto death,” *then*, and then only, the purpose of the Lord should prosper in His hand. It was *sin* that kept back the Kingdom of God, and by this sacrifice of Himself must this obstacle of sin be removed. Bitter might that cup be to drink—bitter, perhaps, past all mortal knowing; but if there was no other way, then that awful cup must be taken from the Father’s hands; and if this was indeed *His* will, it could not fail.

It is also worthy of notice that the Resurrection, in the sense at least of the continued life of the sufferer after He had poured out His soul unto death, is here not merely implied, but plainly stated. It was *after* He had “made His soul (or His life) an offering for sin,” after He had “poured out His soul unto death,” that He should “see His seed and prolong His days”—“see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied”—and that “the purpose of the Lord should prosper in His hand.” The references to His Resurrection that are in the Gospels ascribed to our Lord are often doubted or rejected, because there is so little reference in the Old Testament to such a thing; but here we see that it is contained in this the greatest of all Old Testament prophecies. True, it is *the nation*, in its most faithful representatives or representative, that is primarily spoken of throughout this prophecy; but who could appropriate these words so truly as could *the Christ*—the true Head and Fulfiller of all that pertained to Israel?

Finally, the *nature* of His sacrifice is not indistinctly indicated by the phrases, "he was wounded for (because of) our transgressions, he was bruised for (because of) our iniquities: the chastisement of (required to procure) our peace was upon him" (*i.e.*, "he suffered that which we deserved to suffer, in order that we might be blessed with the peace of God"); "the Lord made to light on him the iniquity of us all" (*i.e.*, that which our iniquities deserved; literally it is, "the guilt of us all"); "for the transgression of My people" (or, marg. R.V., "to whom the stroke was due") was he stricken" (unto death); "when (or if) his soul (or life) shall make an offering (a guilt-offering) for sin"; "he shall bear their iniquities (or their guilt)"; "he was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bare the sins of many" (to "bear" thus means to endure in his own person the consequences of sin; "he made intercession (or interposed) by what he bore) for 'the transgressors.'" There can be no doubt that what is spoken of here is vicarious suffering and sacrifice (*vide* Smith's *Isaiah*, or Skinner's *Isaiah*, *in loc.*).

But there were other representations in the Old Testament that would suggest the same thing to Him. In several of the later Psalms this suffering of the nation that was God's Servant is prominent, and in Psalm xxii. in particular we have the same conception of the meaning of that suffering as we have in Isaiah liii. Now, we know that the opening words of this Psalm, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" were used by Jesus on the Cross, and it would almost seem that in this use of these words He meant to supply the explanation of His suffering. Why was the Servant of God so forsaken? Why was He made such a wonderment to all who looked upon Him? Just for the same reason as is given in Isaiah liii.: in order that God might be "glorified." "He hath not

despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted." The result of the suffering is that "all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the ruler over the nations" (vers. 24-28). Here also the representation is that of the triumph of God's Kingdom through the vicarious suffering of His Servant.

In another set of these late prophecies—those ascribed to *Zechariah*—the Messiah is represented as a sufferer. In chap. xiii. 8—a passage specially applied by our Lord to Himself—we read, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Not only was this passage applied by our Lord to what was then about to befall Him, but He arranged His public entry into Jerusalem so as to be a manifest fulfilment of Zech. ix. 9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass"; which shows how greatly these prophecies, *in which the kingly and the priestly functions are united* (see Zech. vi. 9-15), possessed His mind in these last days, and how He meant men to see their fulfilment in Himself and His experience.¹

The Messianic application of this passage has been denied on the ground that the Shepherd to be slain is "the worthless shepherd" spoken of in chap. xi. But there is also a good Shepherd, even the Lord Himself—represented by the prophet to whom He spake and

¹ Hollmann thinks that, while our Lord may have applied those words to Himself, they tell us nothing respecting the nature of His death (*op. cit.*, pp. 62-65).

through whom He acted—spoken of in chap. xi.—a good Shepherd, Who had been rejected by the people; paid off with thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, and Who is now to be slain by the hands of the wicked, as a judgment on the nation, but to the salvation of “the humble ones.” “Because the sheep refuse the Shepherd’s care, and cannot be convinced of the benefit of it till they feel the want of it, the Shepherd must be slain, that they may be reclaimed to God’s pastoral care” (Dr. Dods on *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, p. 120). Wicked men are spoken of as Jehovah’s sword (Ps. xvii. 13). As Dr. Wright remarks: “The sword of judgment, which in a theocracy might justly have been unsheathed against the impostor, was drawn to smite the Prophet of God. The Shepherd of Israel, mysteriously identified with Jahaveh in chap. xi. 13, and whose contemptuous rejection is there depicted—that mysterious person of whose martyr-death obscure hints are dropped in chap. xii. 10, and whose death was viewed there as a piercing of Jahaveh Himself, which was to be bitterly bewailed by the nation—that Shepherd, termed here by Jahaveh ‘My Shepherd and the man that is My fellow,’ was to be stricken down by the sword of Jahaveh.” Wicked men “were to execute not Jahaveh’s wrath, but His determinate counsel” (*Bampton Lectures*, p. 437). One idea seems to run through all these prophecies and Psalms, viz., that of vicarious suffering on account of the sins of others, and for their sake. The smiting of the good Shepherd—“the man that is My fellow,”—the scattering of the sheep, and the turning of the Lord’s hand again in mercy on the humble, certainly foreshadow in a remarkable way the Cross as it came to Jesus, with the separation and the salvation that were brought about through it.

In the earlier portion of these prophecies we have also

the picture of Joshua the High Priest, representing the people, with iniquity removed from him in spite of Satan's opposition, and clad in rich attire. He was thus to be "a sign": "For, behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch (see Jer. xxiii. 5, etc.), and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (Zech. iii. 1-10).

The *Redemptive result* of the suffering endured by the Representative of God is also strikingly pictured in these prophecies, of the application of which to Himself by Jesus we can have no doubt: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication; and they shall look upon Me (or, according to some MSS., "Him") Whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born (xii. 10). "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," etc. (xiii. 1, 2). We can surely understand how, in the light of such passages, our Lord would both see the necessity for, and be encouraged to go forward to, His Cross of Sacrifice.

But there was yet another set of prophecies which had a great influence on our Lord (as they had on all pious Israelites of His time), which He quoted by name (if Matt. xxiv. 15 be derived from Him), and the language of which He adopted at one of the most solemn moments in His history—when He stood before the High Priest—viz., the prophecies in the Book of *Daniel*. This book had, as Schürer remarks, "a profound influence on the form of the Messianic idea." From it alone, indeed, may be drawn almost the whole of the leading terms and ideas of the Gospel. The questions concerning its date and immediate reference need not concern us. In all probability it dates from the 2nd century B.C., and it has immediately in view

the sufferings of the people of God in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. But it has a look beyond this to "the latter days." It was certainly regarded by the pious of our Lord's day, and probably by our Lord Himself, as containing the great picture of the Messianic times. It is here that we have the most definite representation of *the Kingdom of God* in relation to the Messiah and to the people, as we read in the second chapter (ver. 44): "And in the days of those kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed." The Kingdom is given to "one *like unto a Son of Man*" (vii. 13). This term may, as most modern interpreters maintain, occur primarily as a symbol of the people of God who were to receive the enduring Kingdom, in contrast with the beasts which represented the other powers. (See Driver's *Daniel*, p. 102 f., "Cambridge Bible for Schools," where the subject is fully discussed.) But it was susceptible of, and without doubt very soon received, a personal reference to the Messiah, and there was no reason why He Who was the Head and Representative of the nation should not adopt this as His personal designation, especially if it expressed in itself that which was to His mind the distinguishing characteristic of the true Messiah. This "one like a Son of Man" was brought to "the Ancient of days" "with the clouds of heaven," "and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (vii. 9-14). Here we have the origin of the "coming in the clouds of heaven" of which Jesus so often spoke, and of that going to the Father that He might receive a Kingdom from Him—the going away and the coming again of the Son of Man, both to judgment and to salvation. True, it is said that the Kingdom is given to *the saints* of the Most High; but this

Jesus taught also, as, *e.g.*, when He said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." It is His constant representation that this Kingdom was to be an everlasting possession of all the people of God. He Himself really represented *them*, and so He could take to Himself all that was said of them or of the nation. Moreover, the Kingdom of God as it is represented in this Book of Daniel is one in no merely external, but in a truly spiritual, sense. The God of the Book of Daniel is distinctively "the God of Heaven," who yet "visits" men, "giving them wisdom and understanding," the living God, who rules both in the heavens and in the kingdoms of men, "who doeth according to His will in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth"; a God of absolute righteousness, yet of great mercy and forgiveness to all, Jew and Gentile alike, who acknowledge their sin and turn unto Him. The Kingdom is thus essentially the Kingdom of *God* and of Heaven—the actual rule of the God of Heaven over men on the earth.

We have here, too, very distinctly announced the great feature of the Messianic age—"an end of transgression" (and of the suffering consequent upon transgression), through the forgiveness of sins and the bringing in of an "everlasting righteousness" (ix. 24). As Dr. Driver remarks, "the general sense of the four clauses (in this verse) is that the Messianic age is to be marked by the abolition and forgiveness of sin and by perpetual righteousness," in harmony with many earlier prophecies, the teaching of which it expresses "in a compendious form." And, in close connection with this, we have what is to us the obscure (perhaps intentionally obscure) reference to the "cutting off" of "*an Anointed One*." The old interpretation, which saw in this a direct prophecy of the death of Christ, may be no longer tenable, but as we have reason to believe that

this whole prophecy had, in the time of Christ, a Messianic reference given to it—by Himself also,—it is far from improbable that Jesus took this, in harmony with those other prophecies which we have had before us, as indicating His own fate. This is the more likely, since the passage is followed by the prediction of “the people of a Prince that should come and destroy the city and the sanctuary,” which we know, for certain (if several passages in the Gospels can be trusted), our Lord took as indicating the events that should follow His own off-cutting. As Oehler remarks, “Although the immediate reference may be to the assassinated High Priest, Onias III., the passage would still have a typical reference to the Messiah” (*Theology of Old Testament*, ii. 430).

There is, further, the prediction of the awakening of “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, some to eternal life, and some to shame and eternal contempt” (Dan. xii. 2), where we have *the first occurrence* of the familiar Gospel phrase *eternal life*, and the clearest intimation of a resurrection of the righteous. They that were wise should shine “as the brightness of the firmament” (see Matt. xiii. 43). Finally, we have in these closing chapters of Daniel such indications of *time as may* explain why Jesus came forth saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the glad tidings.”¹

To say that Jesus Himself (and not merely His disciples after Him) drew His ideas from these and similar pro-

¹ As that great Talmudist of former times, Dr. John Lightfoot, says: “Gabriel’s Seventy in Daniel ix. had so plainly and so exactly pointed to this very time, that not only the pious and the studious among the nation could not but observe it, but it had even raised an expectation through a great part of the world of some great Potencie to arise in the Jewish nations about these times” (*The Harmony of the New Testament*, p. 9).

phesies, which in their original signification might not have had direct reference to Him, may seem to some, at first sight, derogatory to our Lord. But that this is not really the case will be seen if we bear in mind the true nature of Messianic prophecy and the real humanity of Christ. All prophecy in its ultimate spiritual significance really pointed to Him as the Christ, and could only find its complete fulfilment in the Kingdom of God. And the Divine in Him was truly "made flesh"—really tabernacled as *a man* amongst us. He had to think, learn, and act as a man—in the very same way as His disciples had to do. His superior insight was not into matters of date and authorship and the literal or original meaning of such prophecies,—matters of no consequence from a spiritual point of view,—but into the great *principles* more or less clearly enunciated by them, and the Divine ideal and purpose to which they pointed. He believed in the reality of the Kingdom of God; He grasped the true spiritual significance of that term; He believed that it should be brought in by one who realised in Himself the true conception of the Messiah; He believed that the time had come for the establishment of that Kingdom, and that to Himself the work was committed; and He gave Himself up in earnest to that work, even though it should involve that sacrifice of Himself which was not indistinctly intimated in many of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Those conceptions of a Kingdom of God on the earth as truly as in heaven, of that Kingdom as being grounded in God's favour to men, and conditioned by righteousness, of its being to be brought in by one who was the true Son of Man, and through suffering, are surely true conceptions in themselves, whence-soever they may have been derived, and however they may have been supported in the mind of Christ. He by no means stood within the limits of the Old Testament: His unique filial consciousness towards God and His spiritual

insight enabled Him to become its *Fulfiller* in the highest spiritual sense. But that He derived His ideas (and language), *in their forms* at least, from those Old Testament prophecies, including that of the necessity for His giving Himself as a sacrifice before the Kingdom of God could come, there can, we think, be no reasonable doubt; and it is in the light of these prophecies—above all, of the principles which animate them in relation to the Kingdom of God—that we can best understand how His Cross was viewed by Jesus Himself.

It has been objected that, if Jesus had had these prophecies before Him as interpreting the necessity for His death, He would have made fuller and more frequent reference to them, particularly to that concerning the suffering Servant of Jehovah. That He did have them before His mind we cannot doubt, not merely because He has distinctly referred to them, but also because the Old Testament was His great Text-book and Guide; and the absence of fuller and more frequent reference to their teaching concerning the necessity for His death may be explained in more ways than one. In the first place, it may have been only gradually that the full truth dawned on His own mind. There were, as we have seen, *two* conceptions of the course of the Messiah in the Old Testament. Jesus manifestly believed that it *might* be possible that the people should receive Him, and the Kingdom that He brought. It was only through their *rejection* that He should die as a sacrifice for sin. His experience in Gethsemane shows us clearly that He was not absolutely certain up till the very last whether that *sacrificial death* should be necessary. In the second place, it is only a mere *précis* of His teaching that we have; and this element in it was precisely that which would be least appreciated by His disciples: we see, indeed, that it was wholly incomprehensible to them till after the event.

Jesus therefore would not dwell upon it; and even if He did, they were not likely to have been receptive of such teaching. In the third place, it belongs to the very idea of the efficacy of the sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah, that it was *men themselves* who should see and interpret in its true light that which had been endured on their behalf by One Whose sufferings had been misunderstood by them. Just as Jesus did not go about telling men that He was the Christ, but rather forbade the declaration, leaving people to find out the great truth for themselves, as a test of their spirituality, so was it with reference to His Cross. The very power of it lay in men's interpretation of it in the light of an awakened conscience, as indeed it had been set forth with reference to the sufferings of the Servant of God in Isaiah. Moreover, it was something too solemn, too mysterious and awful to *speak* much about. It was something that belonged to the inmost soul of Jesus. A fourth reason may be stated as having, not improbably, an influence on our Lord. The triumphant issue of the sufferings in these prophecies, so far as they were referred to the Messiah, was doubtless associated in the minds of the people and of their teachers with the redemption of Israel in an earthly sense, and Jesus sought above all things to avoid identifying Himself with this popular conception of the Messiah. Even the sufferings of the Servant of God in Isaiah, although illustrating the great *principle* of redemption through suffering, were on a lower plane than the sufferings of Christ,—they had still a national and temporal reference. We can understand why Jesus would not wish to identify Himself too closely with such representations. While they served to show the necessity for suffering in order to the triumph of the Kingdom of God, His conception of the kingdom and of the sacrifice necessary to bring it in was higher and more spiritual than anything contained in even these prophecies. In other words, He

was not *limited* by these writings, but, as with respect to the Old Testament in general, He fulfilled them by transcending them.¹

¹ Hollmann enters on a long critical inquiry into the relation of Jesus to Isaiah liii. in particular (*op. cit.*, p. 51 f.), and comes to the twofold conclusion, that Jesus has nowhere referred to its central representation of an atoning sacrifice, nor regarded His own death in that light. Every conceivable way of supporting the assertion that He did view His death in the light of the central significance of that chapter is brought forward and dismissed. By Hollmann, however, the reference to the 12th verse of that chapter in Luke xxii. 37 is held to stand firm, "and he was reckoned with the transgressors," but he explains this as being merely an adaptation of that saying by Jesus to Himself in the trying circumstances in which He then stood, in view of the fate that was then coming upon Him. But we must ask, Why should Jesus have applied that particular passage to Himself, especially if He said that its fulfilment in His case indicated that the things concerning Him were coming to an end, according to the will of God? How could He have said this, or drawn any comfort from the applicability of such a passage to Himself, if He did not regard the whole representation of the Servant of Jehovah in that chapter as indicating His own work and fate? Hollmann says that it was the thought that *He* Who felt Himself united to God as no other, and Who knew the will of God as the only Guide, should be numbered among the transgressors, that troubled the soul of Jesus, and caused even the horror of Gethsemane, and that He found consolation in that utterance from the lips of a saint of the Old Testament. But how could He do this, unless He regarded Himself as standing, in some real sense, in the place of him of whom these words were spoken? Particularly we must ask, How could Jesus have applied these words to Himself, and have been oblivious of those that immediately precede and that immediately follow: "Because he poured out his soul unto death, . . . yet He bare the sins of many." To say that Jesus applied the intervening words to Himself simply because they suited His position, without any serious regard to their context, is to attribute to Him a method of Scripture quotation that is very far from that which we may feel sure would be followed by a reverent student of God's Word at the most critical moment of His life—one, too, who is said to have taken God's will for His Guide. Besides, Jesus was by no means so greatly concerned about *Himself*. But if He felt the horror of being "numbered with the transgressors," He assuredly found His comfort in something more than the solitary words which He is supposed to have picked out of that chapter. Moreover, since the sentence quoted is taken from the close of the passage concerning the Servant of God, and is referred to by Jesus as indicating the coming to an end of all that concerned Him, it seems naturally to carry the whole representation in that prophecy with it. Schweitzer in his presentation of "the

Eschatological Christ" holds that Jesus viewed the necessity for His suffering in the light of the picture of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, and of the necessity for a period of *πειρασμός* (tribulation) before the Kingdom could come. He suffered instead of "the many" destined for the Kingdom. "The Kingdom could not come until the debt which weighed upon the world was discharged. This thought Jesus found in the prophecy of Isaiah, who spake of the suffering Servant of the Lord. This mysterious description of him, who in his travail was despised and misunderstood, who nevertheless bears the guilt of others and afterwards is made manifest in what he has done for them, points, He feels, to Himself." (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 387, 388).—But why should there be this *peirasmós*, and was there no Divine meaning in this bearing of the guilt of others?

CHAPTER II

THE SPECIAL SAYINGS OF OUR LORD WITH REFERENCE TO HIS CROSS

LET us consider next the special utterances of our Lord with reference to His death. There are four of these: the saying at Cæsarea Philippi; that concerning the Son of Man giving Himself "a ransom for many"; His comparison of His sacrifice to that of the Paschal Lamb; and His description of His blood as that of the New Covenant, to which Matthew's Gospel adds, "for the forgiveness (or remission) of sins."

1. In His first express and open announcement of His suffering and death, given while in the region of Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 31 and parallels), it is recorded that, after Peter's confession of Him as *The Christ*, "He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Mark says that "He spake this saying openly." Although this suffering and death was, without doubt, to come to Him in the faithful discharge of His duty, in that way in which the prophets had walked before Him and been killed, so that the saying in this aspect, as Professor Bruce has said, points to this suffering as "the highest instance of a general law, according to which all who are loyal to the Divine claims must more or less suffer for righteousness' sake" (*The Kingdom of God*, p. 231), there

is an unmistakable reference to the necessity that there was for *the Christ* so to suffer. It came immediately after the confession of Him as the Christ by Peter, and the word was spoken "openly" in order to let all know what lay before the Christ. It was something necessary for Him—"the Son of Man *must* (δεῖ) suffer many things," etc., implying that it was Divinely so appointed for Him. Such a reference is also implied in the answer to Peter: "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." The subject uppermost was Peter's recognition of *the Christ of God* in the lowly Son of Man. In this he gave evidence of receptivity to Divine teaching—"flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven"; but he manifested the reverse of this when he thought that it was not possible for *the Christ* to suffer. Jesus told him that such suffering was inevitable if He was to fulfil the mission to which He was called by God. It was necessary, moreover, that He should at this stage warn His disciples that His conception of the Christ was very different from theirs, or from the popular one. A Christ Who should be the lowly "Son of Man" would certainly not commend Himself to the ecclesiastical authorities, but should suffer at their hands,—should even be put to death by them,—and only afterwards come "in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels" (ver. 38). The Divine reason for His death is not as yet declared; nor does His language, as reported, suggest anything of a *sacrificial* nature in it. It is simply, "be killed, and after three days rise again." We cannot tell for certain what was then in His mind. Possibly He reconciled the thought of His impending death with the representation in Daniel of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven—forth from God—which could not be realised without His first dying. He speaks of this "coming" immediately afterwards. It is at the same time extremely probable that He had already applied

to Himself the representations of suffering in order to the triumph of the Kingdom of God, contained in the Old Testament. But, in any view of it, His death was to come to Him in the fulfilment of His mission; and this was to *bring in the Kingdom of God*.

2. Mark x. 45: "For verily the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister (or serve), and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28).

This saying, as it appears in St. Mark's Gospel, stands in a most natural and suggestive connection. Our Lord was on His last journey to Jerusalem, where He foresaw He must meet His relentless enemies in such a way that He was certain to suffer at their hands. He was going up none the less, for He felt convinced that such suffering was inevitable in the fulfilment of His mission. On His way He had met with incidents which deepened His conviction of this necessity. A young ruler had come seeking to know how he should enter into eternal life. There was such earnestness and sincerity about him that Jesus "loved him." Yet he could not make the great renunciation necessary, but made instead "the great refusal." He showed how firmly he was bound by a golden chain to the things of this world, and how impossible it was for him to burst his bonds. If *he* went away sorrowful, much more must Jesus have been sorrowful. It showed Him that something more must be done for men, if they were to be saved and become members of the Kingdom of God. It led Him to speak to His disciples about the impossibility of a rich man being saved, in such a way that they were "astonished exceedingly," and asked, "Who then can be saved?" To this His only answer was, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." Did His thought not go forward in that moment to that great act of redemption which was to be

effected through His sacrifice, which should make possible things that seemed impossible otherwise?

That it did so, is indicated by what follows. He was going alone before His disciples; something in His manner amazed them, and "as they followed, they were afraid." Then He took them and told them again the things that were to happen to Him at Jerusalem: "The Son of Man shall be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, and they shall mock Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall kill Him; and after three days He shall rise again." There may be some enlargement here; but, certainly, He made at this time some such reference to His death.

Then we have the coming to Him of James and John, desiring the chief places in the Kingdom. This implies that He had said something which led His disciples to expect the speedy coming of the Kingdom; but this request brought home to Him the sad fact that even His own chosen and favourite disciples were still holden by the cords of earth, still chained in slavery to this world; and He must have felt still more strongly how necessary would be some great ransoming or redeeming act. Therefore He asked them if they were able to drink of the cup that He should drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that He should be baptized with. Thus it is manifest that it was while the thought of His death at Jerusalem filled His mind, and when its necessity had been made more and more plain to Him, that He said, "The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

As to the meaning of the word rendered "ransom" (*λύτρον*) there can be little doubt, although it has been the subject of much discussion. Its use in the Septuagint shows that it is simply the price paid for the redemption of persons or things—*e.g.*, of the land (Lev. xxv. 24), of a slave

(Lev. xxv. 51, 52), of a man's life (or soul) (Exod. xxi. 30 *bis*, xxx. 12; Num. xxxv. 31, 32 (of one worthy of death); Prov. xiii. 8). It is used in the *Sept.* and A.V. to translate forms of three Hebrew words—גָּאֹל (*Gāal*) and פָּדָה (*Pādāh*), to free, and כִּפֶּה (*Kōpher*), to cover (in one case it translates another Hebrew word, *Mechir*, price (Isa. xlv. 13)); but in every instance it has the meaning of the price paid, either literally or figuratively, for redemption. The connection of *Kōpher* with *Kāphar*, the word commonly translated "make an atonement", has led to the contention that *ransom* here must be understood in an expiatory sense. But *Kōpher* means literally a *covering*, as in Gen. vi. 14, "pitch it within and without with pitch," *i.e.*, material for covering; in Cant. i. 14, iv. 13, it is rendered "Camphire," R.V. "henna flowers" (which were used for *covering* or tinging women's nails with a reddish hue). It is used of the ransom money for each Israelite (Ex. xxi. 30, xxx. 12), and for the life of the man-slayer (Num. xxxv. 31, 32)—that which *covers* them; Samuel protests that he has never taken a ransom (or bribe) to blind the eyes with (1 Sam. xii. 3; cf. Job. xxxiii. 24; xxxvi. 18; Ps. xlix. 7; Prov. vi. 35). In each instance of its use *Kōpher* retains its radical sense of a *covering* (which is also that of *Kāphar*) and in no case is *Kōpher* used of sacrificial atonements or expiations. Nor is the verb λυτρόω ever employed in the *Sept.* to translate *Kāphar*. The other words (*Gāal* and *Pādāh*) are constantly employed to express those ideas of deliverance and redemption of which the Old Testament is so full. We are thus led up to the thought of *the great Redemption* promised to Israel (λύτρωσις)—see Luke i. 68, ii. 38, xxiv. 21; and of the Lord Himself as the Redeemer (ὁ λυτρούμενος)—see Isa. xli. 14, xliii. 14, xlv. 24.¹

¹ It is *possible* that our Lord had in His mind Isa. liii. 11, 12, where making "many" righteous and bearing the sins of "many" is spoken of; but as this is not certain, we cannot press the reference.

The connection in which the saying stands leads us to think *primarily* of an *ethical* aim in this Redemption. It was to break the bonds of sense, and to deliver from the flesh and from the power of the world. But it would also be a deliverance from the death that was the consequence of such worldliness; it would be a ransom for the souls of those who were gaining the world and losing that soul for which they could give nothing in ransom or exchange.

Therefore we have the phrase *ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, "instead of (or for) many." Not much is to be gained by argument about the force of *ἀντί*. The preposition means radically "face to face," over against. While it has often the sense of "instead of," it also points to the price, consideration, or reason for which anything is done, as in Heb. xii. 2, "Who *for* the joy set before Him endured the Cross, and Eph. v. 31," "*for* this cause shall a man leave his father and mother." Its special significance depends on the connection in which it stands. A substitutionary meaning does not necessarily belong to it, except in the sense that what is given or done is substituted for what is received, as, *e.g.*, the price paid for anything. A passage in Matt. xvii. 27, referring to the payment of the Temple tax, is of special interest in this connection. For, according to Exod. xxx. 12, this, or a similar tax, was to be a ransom (*λύτρον*) for each man's soul or life, strictly "*instead of*" the person. In vers. 15, 16, it is called "*atonement money*,"—"to make atonement for your souls." The "*atonement*" is here manifestly by way of ransom paid for, *i.e.*, instead of, their souls or lives, that is to say, this "*covers*" them so that they go free. Professor Bruce thinks that the saying in Mark x. 45 was directly connected in the mind of Jesus with the incident of the payment of this Temple tax, which occurred at Capernaum just before setting out on the journey to Jerusalem. "This life, though they know it not, is like the half-shekel, their ransom money, and I gladly

yield it up to save their souls from death" (*Kingdom of God*, p. 240).¹ This would be the result of His giving His life for them. In *this* sense, therefore, the Saviour regarded His life as given *instead of theirs* and to *ransom* theirs. His sacrifice was that which should redeem men from the power of evil that held them fast and landed them in death. It was truly a ransom for their souls. In what precise way it was to operate to this end is not yet clear. But there is surely no need for asking the question that once so greatly troubled men's minds, and to which such strange answers were given: To *whom* was the ransom to be paid? Many of the Church Fathers held that it was to Satan, and it was not till Anselm that this theory was abandoned. But when a patriot lays down his life to ransom his brethren held in bondage or exposed to death, it is not a price that is *paid* to any one. Yet it is a real *ransom*, given "for" them and "in their stead." Since, as the result of this giving of His life as a ransom, deliverance or redemption should come to many, we see here again that the object of our Lord's death, as present in His own mind, was to bring in that Kingdom of God, in the coming of which alone *the great Redemption*—the *lutrosis* so long promised and so eagerly longed for by many should be found.

3. *The first words at the Passover Supper in the upper room in Jerusalem.* These were, according to Mark (xiv. 22): "And as they were eating, He took a loaf, and having blessed, He brake it, and gave it to them, and said, *Take (ye), this is My body.*" We have, in this and the two following verses, Schmiedel says, with the omission of "Take" (λάβετε), "the relatively (not absolutely) oldest,

¹ Hollmann traces *λύτρον* to its most probable Aramaic equivalent, *purkono*, as that which was most likely actually used by Jesus. It might mean either Redemption in the strict sense, or in the more general sense of "freeing" or "salvation." The meaning was, he holds, that many would by Christ's death be led to repentance, and so saved from destruction (*op. cit.*, pp. 107, 108).

form of the words of the institution of the Eucharist" (*Ency. Bibl.*, ii., col. 1886).

Whether this was the Paschal Supper proper, and whether our Lord meant to institute a lasting ordinance in His Church, are questions which we need not discuss at present. There can be no doubt that the narrative means to represent this as at least standing for the Passover observance, and to make our Lord compare His sacrifice to that of the Lamb that was slain as the prelude to the redemption or deliverance from Egypt. His "body" here represents Himself sacrificed as the prelude to the greater spiritual and eternal Redemption represented by the coming of the Kingdom of God. Was it only in a general way that He made this comparison, or can we draw from it some definite conclusions respecting the nature of His Sacrifice? Here we think there are two dangers to be guarded against—on the one hand, putting too much into our interpretation of this representation, and, on the other hand, failing to see what it really does suggest. The question is not concerning the origin and value of sacrifice in general, or of the Passover sacrifice in particular. We cannot now maintain that *sacrifice* was, in any form of it, a *direct* or positive Divine institution. It had its origin in the natural desire to please and to placate the Deity, conceived as men in the childhood of the world were alone able to think of Him. The "Mosaic Legislation" concerning sacrifice was designed to free the custom from some of its worst abuses, and to make it an agency for keeping the people in their Covenant relation to God. So far as it implied a deepened sense of sinfulness, it was a great advance on what had gone before. But a system of animal sacrifices was very imperfect, and liable to great misconception. There were, however, no sacrifices for real *moral* transgressions, and none of them was a real propitiation of God or expiation of sin. They were a means whereby

ceremonial and "legal" transgressions, etc., might be "covered" and the people kept in the community of Jehovah.¹ But, in spite of many dark associations, the idea of sacrifice ripened into some of the profoundest thoughts that man has reached concerning God and his relation to God and his fellows. Amongst the highest conceptions of the Old Testament was that, which was gained at length, of the vicarious sacrifice of the righteous on behalf of the sinful and unworthy. While, therefore, we can no longer interpret the death of Christ as the foreseen fulfilment of a Divinely appointed system of sacrifice, there is no reason for deeming it improbable that Jesus taught His disciples the significance of His death by comparing it to those sacrifices with which they were so familiar, and which they regarded as being of Divine appointment. Such sacrifice furnished a suitable *form* for His representation.

Our Lord's personal attitude towards the sacrificial system that was at the foundation of the worship of His people, is not easy to determine from the material afforded by the Synoptic Gospels. We read, indeed, that He bade the Leper whom He cleansed go and show himself to the Priest, and offer for his cleansing the things which Moses commanded; but the added words, "for a testimony unto them," do not indicate His own sympathy with the requirement. The saying in the A.V. in Mark ix. 49, "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," is doubtful, and has been removed from the text of the R.V. He certainly recognised "the Law and the Prophets" as a whole, and there was a sense in which He regarded it as His mission to "fulfil" them. But the connection shows that it was

¹ It ought to be noted also that the idea of these sacrifices was not that of "atoning *for*" in the sense of "making amends or reparation." The word translated "Atonement" in the Old Testament (A.V.) means "a covering" (see Dr. Driver's art. "Propitiation" in *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv.), Dr. Davidson's *The Theology of the Old Testament*, and Chap I. Pt. iv. of this Book).

the moral and spiritual requirements and ideals that He had in view. In the place of many things said "to them of old time," He put His "But *I* say unto you." Instead of leaving the offerer at the altar to be satisfied with the official Atonement for him there, He bids him first be reconciled to his *brother* (not only to God), and then come and offer his gift. This was something quite new, and opposed to the current satisfaction with the efficacy of the altar atonements. In like manner He set aside the "Mosaic" Laws of clean and unclean foods for that which affected the character of the man. He adopted twice, in opposition to His legal critics, the saying of the Prophet, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,"—something which, He said, they were wilfully ignorant of. Yea, He said "In this place there is *a greater thing* than the Temple" (which, with its sacrifices, was everything to them). Most express of all was His saying to the scribe, who declared that to love God and the neighbour was "much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices": "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God" (Mark xii. 32–34). When He purified the Temple, it was on the prophetic ground that it should be "a house of *prayer* for all nations." The sacrificial ritual was presided over by the Sadducees, with whom our Lord had little in common. And, when we think of the enormous quantity of animal blood shed in the sacrificial ritual, we can scarcely believe that the spirit of our Lord had much in sympathy with such worship. On the whole, the impression is made on our minds that His attitude towards the sacrificial system was rather that of the early Prophets, than that of one who regarded it as having a special Divine approbation and purpose.

The Passover, however, had a special significance of its own, and no true Israelite could fail to observe it. It pointed back to the great deed that lay at the foundation of the whole national and religious life of

the people—their Redemption from Egyptian bondage, and their acceptance by God as His own chosen people. It went back to something earlier than all the Levitical sacrifices, and in it, as Philo says, each Israelite rejoiced to be himself honoured with the priestly function (although this was perhaps more ideal than real) (*Vita Mos.*, iii. 121, Bohn's trans.), and by it, year after year, he was reminded and assured of his Covenant relation to his God. There was a special fitness in our Lord's choosing this Passover observance for impressing upon His disciples the nature of His coming death. If ever there was a time when the thoughts of the people were specially centred on Redemption, and when their longings for the coming of the Kingdom of God found expression, it was at that Passover service to which they gathered from all parts of the world, as indeed we find such longings expressed in the later Jewish prayers for the occasion. The memory of what their God had wrought for them kindled their hopes for what He would again work in their behalf. It was in that first great Redemption that God had revealed Himself as their God and that their nation had been founded. It was most natural, therefore, that our Lord should choose this occasion for the representation of His death as that which should bring in the greater Redemption of the coming of the Kingdom of God. St. Luke's Gospel tells us that Jesus specially desired to eat this last Passover with His disciples: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). It also tells us that He regarded the Passover as something that had its *fulfilment* in the Kingdom of God (xxii. 16), and it shows us how confident He was that through His sacrifice of Himself the Kingdom of God should come—ver. 18: "I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come." This last particular—one of great importance for

understanding our Lord's view of His death—is preserved for us by the other two Evangelists also (Matt. xxvi. 29; Mark xiv. 25). It is quite clear, therefore, that Jesus regarded the Lamb that was slain as the prelude to the Redemption from Egypt, as fitted to shadow forth that sacrifice of Himself that should bring the greater Redemption of the Kingdom of God; that He had no manner of doubt that through His sacrifice the Kingdom would come, and that He wished His disciples to regard His death as having, in some sense, a similar relation to them and their spiritual and eternal Redemption, as the Lamb slain in Egypt had to their fathers and to the first great Redemption on which the nation in its Covenant relation to Jehovah was founded. He would doubtless also think of that "Servant of God" who should be led "like a Lamb to the slaughter," although, in the absence of evidence, we cannot press this point in the present connection. His sayings, however, at this time show that this passage was in His mind (Luke xxii. 37; Mark xiv. 21).

The question now is, What was the relation of His sacrifice to their Redemption, and, in particular, whether He meant His disciples to understand that it should have a relation to the Divine Forgiveness of sin and to their acceptance with God? To this question we may answer, (1) That it was impossible for His disciples, with their view of sacrifice, to understand Him otherwise. With all sacrifices with Blood the idea of "Atonement" was associated—represented by the sprinkling of the Blood of the victim. Of the Blood it was said, "I have given it to you to make Atonement for your souls." As containing the life, it belonged to God, and was *given* by Him to the people for this purpose. It was therefore never to be eaten, but to be sprinkled on the altar for "Atonement." Only when the sin that might have rested on the worshipper was thus "covered" could he draw nigh acceptably with

his gift. That the Passover was a *sacrifice* was denied by many Protestant theologians, under the exigencies of the controversy with the Roman Catholic Church. It is denied by some modern writers, *e.g.*, Schultze. But, as Oehler and Kurtz have shown, there can be no doubt that it was a true sacrifice. As Dr. Edersheim remarks, it preceded all the Levitical sacrifices, and may be truly said to have been, "in a sense, the cause of all the later sacrifices of the Law and of the Covenant itself" (*The Temple and its Services in the Time of Christ*, p. 234). The question is not what was the original meaning of the Feast, nor how many transformations it had passed through prior to the time of Christ, but *how it was regarded by the men of His time*, especially those who were united with Him in the last Passover Supper. We find the Passover frequently spoken of as a sacrifice in the Old Testament, and it was so regarded by the later Jewish teachers. Both Philo and Josephus speak of it as such. The Jewish doctors held that it was allied to the *peace-offerings*, the blood of which was sprinkled on the altar, and the bodies eaten by the offerers in token of their acceptance.¹ Dr. Edersheim says, "It belonged neither to one nor another class of the sacrifices; it was neither exactly a sin-offering nor a peace-offering, but combined them both" (*The Temple and its Services*, p. 233). It was not a sin-offering, because the flesh of it was eaten by the offerers, yet the receiving of the Blood by the Priests (even though the offerer himself may have slain the victim) and its sprinkling on the Temple altar show that it had an "atoning" element associated with it. This was true of all animal sacrifices or offerings—the Blood had always and only this use and significance; the people and their offerings were only made acceptable thus. The Blood of the Paschal sacrifice was

¹ See proofs in Cudworth's *The True Nature of the Lord's Supper*, chaps. ii. and iii., "Intellectual System," Andover edition, p. 508 ff.

sprinkled on the altar as "an acceptance," to quote the words of the modern Jewish Service. The sprinkling of the Blood of the first Passover Lambs on the lintels and door-posts must have had this significance to the men of Christ's time. Josephus, speaking of it, says that when "they were all ready to depart, they offered the sacrifice and *purified their houses* with the blood, using bunches of hyssop for this purpose" (*Antiquities*, Book ii., chap. xiv. 6).¹ While, however, the Jews of our Lord's time had been made familiar not only with an "atoning" efficacy in the Blood of sacrifice, but, according to the prevailing conception of the nature of sacrifice, with the idea of *substitutionary* Atonement, it may be questioned whether the Paschal Lamb was regarded as having been the substitute for the first-born of Israel when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. It is certain that afterwards it was associated with the Redemption of the first-born of

¹ What was precisely the value of "the Blood," which as containing "the soul" or "life" made "Atonement" or "covering" for the souls of the worshippers, is difficult to determine. There do not appear clear and good grounds for either the old theory of "life for life"—the animal life being accepted instead of that of the sinful offerer, who deserved death—or for the more modern theory that its atoning significance consisted in the presentation of a pure life to God. This last view seems far too refined, and the offering of an *animal* life to God could scarcely meet, or even represent, what was really a moral requirement. All that can be said, perhaps, is that it was so instituted or appointed. Professor Paterson, in his article on "Sacrifice" in *Dictionary of the Bible*, inclines to the older opinion, for which there is not a little to be said, especially from the relation in which "bearing sin" stands to *Atonement* on the one hand and to *death* on the other; also from the identification of "shedding blood" with "taking life." It is said, indeed, that the Blood is given "to make Atonement *for your souls* (or lives)." But perhaps all that can be affirmed with certainty is that the Blood, being the life, belonged to God, and was given by Him (so it was represented) to make "Atonement" for *their* souls or lives. In what precise way it did so is not stated. Professor Paterson also thinks that the *substitutionary* conception of sacrifice, common in later Judaism, already appears in the Levitical sacrifices. See *Dictionary of the Bible*, iv. p. 342. Dr. Davidson regards it as questionable whether this idea is to be found in the Law. (*Op. cit.* p. 353).

man and beast (Exod. xiii. 11-15, xxxiv. 20, Heb. *Pādāh* Sept. λυτρόω), and, although actual proof is wanting, it would not have been unnatural, but in keeping with the idea of substitutionary sacrifice in general, so to regard it. In this case, Jesus would have pointed to Himself as being in His death, in a higher sense, the substitute for those for whom He died, and, *in this sense*, their "ransom" from the death to which they as sinners were liable. We have no proof, however, that this thought was in His own mind or in the minds of His disciples. But since it was owing to the sprinkling of the Blood on their dwellings that the Israelites were spared and delivered, and since the Pass-over Lamb, which commemorated this, was always slain at the Temple and had its Blood sprinkled on the altar as "atoning" Blood, after which only could the sacrifice be partaken of by the offerers, like that of the peace-offering or as a "Feast upon Sacrifice,"—having thus been assured of their acceptance and communion with God,—it was impossible that the sacrifice so treated should not have been associated in the minds of the disciples with the idea of "Atonement" or Remission of sins. At the Paschal Supper, the Lamb was usually distributed with the formula, "This is the body of the Paschal Lamb."¹ When, therefore, our Lord in their presence substituted for the flesh of the Paschal Lamb the bread that should represent His body—when He said, "This is My body"—He must have had in view, and meant His disciples to think of, a Redemption greater than that from Egyptian bondage, which should follow His sacrifice of Himself, and they could not but associate with that redemptive sacrifice that thought of "Atonement" or of their acceptance with God, which was set forth by the sprinkled Blood of the Paschal Lamb. It must have led them, when they came

¹ Hausrath, *New Testament Times*, ii. 263, referring to Mishna Pesachim, last chapter, sec. 3.

to think of the meaning of the Cross, to regard their Lord's sacrifice of Himself as an act by which they should be brought into a new Covenant relation to God and of acceptance with Him. Our Lord's act and words could have no other meaning to those who were along with Him at that moment commemorating the Redemption from Egypt, who were rejoicing in the blessings that were thus renewed to them as members of the Covenant, and who were at the same time, doubtless, cherishing the hope of the Divine appearing for "the consolation of Israel," and for its deliverance from its miseries through the bringing in of the long-looked-for Kingdom of God. The coming of the Kingdom had also a Judgment element, and they would understand that this sacrifice of their Master on their behalf would "cover" them in that Day, as the sprinkled Blood of the lamb, slain in Egypt, had covered their fathers when the destroying angel passed through the land, slaying the first-born of the Egyptians. The least that we can say is, that those who heard Him would, either then or afterwards, understand that He was giving Himself as a sacrifice, in some sense, for their deliverance, as that of a people whose sins had been removed, and who had been brought into such acceptance with God as should be manifested in the great Redemption of the promised Kingdom.¹

¹ Oehler holds that the Passover sacrifice was really a peace-offering, and as there can be no peace-offering without an Atonement, which is accepted by the sprinkling of the Blood, so does the Passover presuppose an act of expiation, effected by the application of the Blood of the Paschal Lamb. But he holds that there is no ground for saying that it was in the place of the first-born of Israel, who had properly incurred death (*Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ii. 114). Professor Paterson in his article on "Sacrifice," and Dr. Driver in that on "Propitiation," in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, both hold that there was an "atoning" element in all the four kinds of sacrifice with Blood. As to an atoning element in the Paschal Lamb, Dr. Moulton, in his art. "Passover," holds that "in older days a Feast meant always a sacrifice," and that, as regards this particular sacrifice, "the peculiar element stands

Our confidence in this conception of the Passover sacrifice as having an "atoning" value, is deepened by the use made of it by Paul—who speaks of Christ as "our Passover sacrificed"—and by the other Christian writers, especially the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose argumentation for the confirmation of the faith of Jewish Christians rests largely on such a significance in all sacrifices with Blood, and would have been quite valueless had this view not been entertained by the Jews of that time. In Heb. xi. 28 it is said of Moses: "By faith he kept (or instituted) the Passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them." It "covered" them. So should the sacrifice of Christ cover those who believed when the judgment of God should fall on the sinful nation. In the Fourth Gospel, also, Jesus is presented as the true Paschal Lamb, who by His death takes away the sin of the world. The Christian Apostles, in explaining the death of Christ after the analogy of "atoning" sacrifices were not thus introducing something new, but only following out what had been plainly suggested to them by such representations on our Lord's part as those before us. But, of course, it does not follow that the Jewish conception of sacrifice is to rule us in our interpretation of the Cross.

(2) This meaning is confirmed by the fact that the very idea of the Kingdom of God, to bring in which Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice, and which He so confidently felt should follow His death, was that of a Dispensation founded on a great Divine act of Remission of sins, or declaration of the Divine Forgiveness. It was because of such Forgiveness or in it, that God should appear as their Redeemer.

out in the present accounts with especial prominence. For the blood ceremonial (Exod. xii.) can hardly have any other meaning." In art. "Feasts," Principal Harding gives expression to a similar opinion.

4. The words that follow have a similar significance, "*This is My Blood of the Covenant*" (Mark xiv. 24). Although our Lord's thought probably went back to the institution of the Passover as the real foundation of the Covenant between God and Israel, it is generally held that He had also in view the narrative in Exodus xxiv. of the solemn inauguration of the Covenant of Sinai through the mediation of Moses. It is there said that Moses took the Blood of the sacrifices—burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, sacrificed to the Lord—and, having first sprinkled half of it on the altar, sprinkled the other half upon the people, and said, "Behold the Blood of the Covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words," or "upon all these conditions." Our Lord, therefore, here points to His own Blood as that of the "New Covenant"—(although the word *new* may not properly belong to the text, it is implied)—which it was announced through Jeremiah and other prophets should be made with the people, and which, while inward and spiritual, was based on the Forgiveness of sins (Jer. xxxi. 31 f). The only questions are, What part the Blood played in relation to a Covenant of this kind between God and man; and whether (according to our conception of this) our Lord meant merely to say that His Blood was the Confirmation or Seal of the Covenant, *assuring* men of God's Love and Forgiveness (as some hold); or that it had also an "atoning" efficacy, having to do with the declaration of Forgiveness, and the acceptance of men into the Covenant relation. But supposing that the idea that what is here denoted is the *confirmation* of the New Covenant is correct, there must have been something in the sacrifice of Christ which was *the ground or reason* of such confirmation; for Jesus certainly did not refer to His Blood in any merely material sense. As Professor J. S. Candlish remarks: "A covenant becomes effectual when its *condition* is fulfilled, and, in the cases where

it was ratified by sacrifices, this was meant by solemn religious sanctions to preclude the parties from retreating from their engagements. The death of Christ fulfilled the condition necessary for the bestowal of the forgiveness and renewal promised by God, and so made His disposition of Grace effectual and unchangeable" ("The Notion of Divine Covenants in the Bible," *Expository Times*, iv. 21).

It has to be observed that before Moses sprinkled the half of the Blood upon the people, he had sprinkled the other half of it on the altar, before God (Exod. xxiv. 6). This could have no other meaning than that which was contained in all similar sprinklings of the altar with the Blood, which as belonging to God was given by Him to the people, "to make Atonement for their souls." It is always this that secures the people's *acceptance* with their God. According to all analogy, therefore, our Lord must have meant, when He spoke of His Blood as that "of the (New) Covenant shed for many," that it was shed for them, as being in some sense an "atoning sacrifice"; that it was that which so "sanctified" them that they could be accepted by God as those to whom the blessings of the New Covenant belonged. As in the case of the Paschal Lamb—both offered and eaten—we see the two sides of this institution of the New Covenant. As in the institution of the Old Covenant, the Blood sprinkled on the altar was "the Blood of Atonement," while that sprinkled on the people was that of their acceptance of the Covenant and consecration to God under it; so we behold in the sacrifice of Christ the "atoning" element Godwards, in virtue of which the Divine Forgiveness goes forth, and also that which, "taken" by us, signifies our entrance into the Covenant, the acceptance of it on our part, and our inspiration and consecration under it—that which brings to us, in fact, the spiritual power promised in the New Covenant.

That this was the significance of the Blood of the Covenant, is confirmed by what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says respecting it—writing as he does with express reference to Jewish beliefs. In chap. ix. 19–22 he says that Moses “sprinkled both the book itself, and all the people, saying, This is the Blood of the Covenant which God commanded to you-ward,” and that the tabernacle itself and all the vessels of the ministry were in like manner “sprinkled with blood,” according to that principle of the Law, that “all things are cleansed with Blood, and apart from shedding of Blood there is no remission.” And in chap. x. 29 he speaks of him who “counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, a common thing”—sanctification, in this connection, meaning, of course, cleansing from guilt, so as to be acceptable to God.

Another suggestion has been made as to the significance of the Blood of the Covenant, in keeping with what Professor Robertson Smith maintains was the original way of making a Covenant by both parties having communion in the same Blood. The question before us, however (as in the case of the Passover sacrifice), is not what was the original way of making a Covenant, or the original use of the Blood in making such Covenants between man and man, but what was the significance of the Blood as sprinkled on God’s altar according to the Israelitish Legislation? and the common belief of the people of the time. With reference to the above-quoted opinion of Dr. Robertson Smith, Dr. Davidson remarks (in his art. “Covenant” in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 512): “This may be, but, in the main, the sacrifice, being an offering to Jehovah, was piacular, atoning for and consecrating the people on their entering upon their new relation to Jehovah, Heb. x. 19, ff.” The idea of a common participation in the same element has, no doubt, its place in relation to a Covenant sacrifice. We see it in the Feast that followed the institution of the

Sinaitic Covenant, and in relation to the sacrifice of Christ this is precisely what is signified by the institution of the Lord's Supper. That life which was offered to God on our behalf, being accepted, becomes the ground of our confident communion with God and the source of our spiritual sustenance. We "feed" on Christ as He in Whom God and man are one. But in all sacrifices wherein this Communion idea was expressed there was, first of all, an "Atonement" offered and accepted. As Dr. Cudworth showed very clearly, long ago, the Lord's Supper is "*a Feast upon Sacrifice*"; but before there can be the Feast there must be the "atoning" sacrifice, bringing men into acceptance with the Holy God.

As Dr. Davidson points out in his article just mentioned, in Deutero-Isaiah the New Covenant becomes associated with that Servant of the Lord, who represents "the idea of the true knowledge or word of the true God implanted in Israel, incarnated in the seed of Abraham," and "personified into a Being," with whom we have seen reason to believe our Lord identified Himself, and whose experience of suffering He took as pointing forward to and illustrating His own—as finding, indeed, its complete fulfilment in His Cross. In the words of a recent writer on this prophecy: "The Divine ideal, represented by the Servant of the Lord, becomes the basis of a new national life, inasmuch as it expresses that for the sake of which Jehovah enters into a new Covenant relation with His people" (Skinner's *Isaiah*, "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges," ii. 29. See also Principal G. A. Smith's *Isaiah*).

We find here, therefore, a natural transition to that other main thought which we believe our Lord had before Him with reference to His sufferings, viz., that sacrifice through which the Servant of the Lord should reach His triumph as depicted in Isaiah liii., especially in the words,

"If he should make his soul an offering for sin." This is in harmony with all those other sayings—the giving of His life as a ransom for many, of His body "for" His disciples, and of His Blood as that of the New Covenant; and also with the joyous, though solemn, nature of the occasion.

5. The terms in which He speaks of His Blood give also good reasons for accepting as at least as truly expressing the thought of the Master, the words that are added in Matthew's Gospel, *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*, "for," literally "unto, remission of sins." His Blood that was being shed—the same word (*ἐκχύνω*) that is used by Jesus of the Blood of the prophets that had been wickedly shed—"all the righteous Blood shed on the earth" (Matt. xxiii. 35; Luke xi. 50)—is "for" (*περί*, literally "about," "concerning"—common with sacrifices) "many." His violent death should be Divinely overruled for the good of many; yea, it was "concerning" them, or in relation to them, that it was submitted to; it should bring them even that remission of sins which, in one aspect, was identical with the coming of the Kingdom of God. As Professor Bruce asks: "According to all the analogies of the Old Testament sacrificial system, what can 'blood shed for many' mean but blood shed for the remission of sins?" (*The Kingdom of God*, p. 147).¹ In any case, the idea of the "remission of sins" was fundamental to that of the Kingdom of God, and if Jesus died to bring the one, He died to bring the other also; if, indeed, we should not rather say that, so far at least, the two are identical. The differences in the reports of our Lord's words at the Last Supper, as given by the three Evangelists and by Paul, are really of very little consequence. We

¹ Professor Harnack remarks: "That Jesus at the celebration of the first Lord's Supper described His death as a sacrifice which He should offer for the forgiveness of sin, is clear from the account of Paul" (*History of Dogma* (E.T.), i. 66, note).

may confidently say, in the words of Professor Bruce, "It is morally certain that Jesus uttered words which gave His disciples a most important hint as to the significance of His Passion, affording clearer insight into the mystery than any previously spoken. Virtually, if not in so many words, He said, This cup denotes My blood, the blood of a new Covenant shed for many for the remission of sins" (*The Kingdom of God*, p. 248).

There is a tendency to belittle the importance of the Last Supper for the understanding of the Cross. But the fact that Jesus compares His death to the two great *introductory* sacrifices, through the Blood of which the Israelites were originally received into the Covenant relationship, certainly strongly suggests that He had in view the setting up of a new relationship of men to God, with respect to which His sacrifice of Himself should be the ground of their confidence; for the Blood of Sacrifice had always the significance of rendering those for whom it was poured out, acceptable to God.¹

¹ As already mentioned, Dr. Hollmann restricts the words at the Last Supper to the two corresponding sayings, "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood" (*op. cit.*, pp. 133 ff.); and it must be admitted that he appears to have some reason on his side for regarding τῆς διαθήκης (which makes a double genitive in the sentence) as a later insertion. On the other hand, we have in 1 Cor. xi. 25, which is the earliest written account of the words at the Last Supper, ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη; and, as Professor Harnack remarks respecting an attractive theory put forth by Spitta, "the words in 1 Cor. xi. 23, 'For I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you,' are too strong for me." Dr. Hollmann ascribes the reference to the Covenant as due to the Pauline conception of Christianity as a new dispensation. But Paul only in one other place, (2 Cor. iii. 6 f.), makes any special use of the idea of a new Covenant, and it cannot be described as one of his leading ideas. His account of the institution shows, at the least, that the reference to the Covenant was in the Christian tradition before his conversion. Why should not Jesus, with His interest in the Old Testament, which in its highest significance He regarded it as His mission to fulfil, have thought of the New Covenant—one of the most spiritual representations therein? as Professor Davidson has said, "In its visions of the New Covenant the Old Testament becomes Christian" (art. "Covenant," *Dictionary of the*

We gather, therefore, from these special sayings, that our Lord's death on the Cross came to Him as something inevitable in the fulfilment of His mission as the Founder of the Kingdom of God; that it was to ransom or deliver men from sin, and the death that is its consequence; that it was a sacrifice offered on their behalf in order that whatever hindered the coming of the Kingdom of God might be removed, so that the Kingdom might come in its power and the New Covenant of spiritual and eternal life be established; that His Sacrifice had a relation to that Forgiveness of Sin which was the basis of the New Covenant. But it would, of course, be a great mistake to interpret the Sacrifice of Christ after the manner of animal sacrifices. It must also be remembered that the contents of that New Covenant into which men are brought "through His Blood," and the nature of that Kingdom of God which is thus to be established, are wholly ethical and spiritual. Therefore our Lord's ultimate and governing aim and purpose in this sacrifice of Himself were ethical and spiritual,—in other words, to deliver men from the bondage of sense and sin,

Bible, i. 514). But even though we should allow nothing but these two short sayings to stand (or even, as we have seen, though we take Professor Pfleiderer's still shorter recension, "This is My Body"), the words of Christ, in the circumstances in which they were spoken, could only suggest to His disciples that He was giving Himself, in some sense, as a sacrifice for them (or "for many"), and with the idea of such a sacrifice, that of "Atonement" could not but have been associated in their minds, for it belonged to *all* sacrifices with Blood. Dr. Hollmann himself paraphrases the words thus: "As I now break the bread and pour out the wine, so will My Body be broken and My blood poured out; yet not in vain, but for salvation to many"—a *general* statement, like that concerning the life given as a ransom for many. But then the questions remain: *In what way* Jesus, through His death for them, should bring salvation to men? What was *salvation* in His estimation, and what did it involve in relation to God? Whether Dr. Hollmann is right in seeing this conception realised in the leading of men to repentance (and *so* making them members of the Kingdom) will be seen further on. We certainly agree with him, that Christ's sacrifice must be interpreted as the continuation and completion of His entire life-service.

and to make them in spirit and in truth the children of God in the Kingdom of His Love. If His sacrificial death was to give them the consciousness of Forgiveness, this was in order that they might become the trustful, loving, and obedient children of their Heavenly Father.

We regard these sayings of our Lord as well attested, and as expressing in no uncertain terms His own view of His death ; but we would here repeat that, even though He had *said* nothing on the subject, the fact that He accepted His death as the culmination of His life-work to bring in the Kingdom of God, is alone sufficient for an Evangelical conception of His Cross, especially if we have regard to His feelings in view of its approach and His actual experience thereon.

CHAPTER III

THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR LORD IN VIEW OF, AND IN, HIS DEATH

IF we follow the narrative of our Lord's life, especially as it is given us in the Gospel according to Mark, the impression is created that He only gradually apprehended the significance of His death in relation to the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and that, as He Himself apprehended it more and more fully, He made corresponding disclosures of its nature to His disciples.¹ This is contrary, indeed, to the view commonly held, which is that, from the first setting out on His work as the Christ, Jesus had the Cross *in all its significance* clearly and fully before Him. But it is *facts* that must guide us if we would find truth on this or on any subject—primarily here, the facts recorded in the Gospels. As Dr. Mason remarks with reference to the development of our Lord's human character, and with regard to the power displayed by Him during His life on earth: "Nor need we have any fears in following the exact guidance of the Bible. We are safe, and the honour of our Lord is safe, in the hands of those who were moved by the Holy Ghost to write of Him in the first days of the Church."² And, as the same writer says (while Christ was truly Divine), "All Christ's knowledge, as conveyed to us in the Gospel teaching, was, in its form, human knowledge, not Divine. Before knowledge which was Divine in

¹ This is well brought out in Dr. Menzies' *The Earliest Gospel*.

² *The Conditions of Our Lord's Life on Earth*, p. 115.

its origin could come through Him to us, it must needs be translated into human knowledge, by passing through His human mind, expressed by His human lips in human language" (*ibid.*, p. 118). Such knowledge, we may add, in order to be human, must have been humanly gained; else it would not be human knowledge. This is in keeping with the representation of our Lord's early growth in wisdom, in insight, or understanding, and of His "learning through the things that He suffered." There is no fear of our thus losing the Divine element in His person: we shall only see Him to be "the more human, the more Divine"; and we shall be freed from those *a priori* conceptions which hinder our understanding both of His Person and of His work. How otherwise, indeed, can we regard as real His preaching of the Kingdom, His offer of it to the people, His calls to receive it, and His warnings of the consequences of rejecting it? How can we understand His appeals to the nation to receive Him, or justify His entry into Jerusalem as the Messiah? His prayer in Gethsemane shows clearly that, even then, He thought that it was possible that His death, in one aspect of it at least, might be averted. To think otherwise seems to take all reality out of the life of Christ. We do not mean to say, however, that Jesus began His course with the *certain* expectation of a ready acceptance on the part of the people, and only later came to take an altogether different view of His fate. Far from that. Before ever He came forward to His special work, He had pondered deeply the nature of the Kingdom of God and the course of Him who was to bring it in. Although He may have expected the Kingdom to be set up in an outward form on the earth, He had resolutely rejected all that was worldly in His conception of it; He believed that it must be deepest of all, spiritual—the reign of God in the people's hearts, and the result of the working of God's Grace. He had rejected also all that was worldly

or external in His thought of the Christ and His work. But the Old Testament gave a twofold conception of the course of the Messiah, and events alone could show which was the ideal that must be realised by Himself. If the people received the Kingdom and its Messiah, the brighter pictures would be fulfilled at least in their true spiritual import; if they rejected the Kingdom, then it could only come, and the Christ be enthroned, through suffering and death.

If Mark ii. 20 stands in its proper place chronologically, Jesus had anticipated His death some time before Cæsarea Philippi,—it is natural to believe that He must have done so; but it was only then that He began to speak definitely concerning it. Even then, however, He speaks only of being “rejected”—formally, indeed—“by the elders, and the chief priests, and scribes,” and of being “killed.” It was something, moreover, Divinely appointed for Him (Δειν). Later, as they passed through Galilee, He told His disciples that He should be “delivered up” into the hands of men, who should “kill Him” (Mark ix. 31; Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Luke ix. 44). In Mark x. 45, He, for the first time, speaks distinctly of His death as being for the benefit of others—“a ransom for many.” At the Supper (Mark xiv. 18–21) He bases the necessity for His death distinctly on the Scriptures: “For the Son of Man goeth, even as it is written of Him”; “*The Son of Man is going away.*” Scripture states that He is to do so, *i.e.*, there is a Scripture passage which speaks of an interruption of the career of the Messiah, and represents Him as withdrawn for a time in order to appear again. If we inquire what passage is meant, Isaiah liii. readily occurs to us. The Messiah once identified with the Servant of Jehovah in that chapter, Scripture is seen to give this forecast of His history (vers. 10, 12); He is to go away out of the world under the most painful circumstances, but only in order to come

back again to enjoy a complete and final triumph" (Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel*, p. 251). But here comes distinctly into view the idea of the Messiah's death *as a sacrifice in view of sin*, for this is how the death of the Servant of God in Isaiah is represented. This conception of His death is now distinctly put before His disciples by the references to His Body and His Blood at the Supper. Again, to quote Dr. Menzies: "Christ then regards His death as a sacrifice by which the new conditions of life in the Kingdom He came to set up are to be introduced. A strange fact, that the death of the Messiah should be called for as the preliminary to the coming of Messiah's Kingdom! Yet there is Scripture for it,—and Jesus has considered the matter and consented to play the part, so different from that which might have been anticipated, which now opens before Him" (*The Earliest Gospel*, p. 253). After His rejection at Jerusalem, there seemed nothing left to Him but this. He had anticipated His death at an earlier period, and possibly He looked on its necessity in keeping with the representation of the coming of the Son of Man from God, in Daniel. Afterwards He came to regard it, or at least began to speak of it, as a necessary sacrifice for the sake of others. Perhaps the Transfiguration scene marks the decisive transition point. He was assuredly not to be taken up to Heaven, but must go forward to Jerusalem to die. Still, to leave no Scripture unfulfilled, to make all quite certain, and to give the people an opportunity of escaping the doom that would be consequent on His rejection, He enters Jerusalem and acts as the Messiah. When He is definitely rejected there, He turns away with great sorrow in His heart, shedding tears over the doomed city; and saying, "Henceforth thou shalt not see Me, till thou shalt say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 37-39). The opportunity which He gave them to receive Him must have been given in all

sincerity, although, doubtless, He had little hope that His death should be thereby averted. But, after this definite rejection in Jerusalem, He would feel that the description of the Servant of God in Isaiah liii.—“he was despised and rejected of men, and we hid as it were our faces from him”—applied in a most literal and unmistakable way to Himself, and that what lay before Him was not only death, but a sacrificial death in view of the sins of the people. He still loved them, but their sin was great—so great that the Kingdom of God could not come, until He should, as represented in Isaiah, make His soul “an offering (or sacrifice) for sin.” This seemed required of Him by the Holy Father. This was what their sin made necessary: He must make His soul a guilt-offering for the people’s sin. And His love was so great that He would not shrink even from this. *Then* the Kingdom would come; *then* should He see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Full of this thought and purpose at the Last Supper, He sets vividly before His disciples this sacrifice of Himself. The Paschal Service, with its sacrificial “Lamb,” doubtless brought it home still more powerfully to Him.

We must certainly distinguish between our Lord’s belief concerning the meaning of His sacrifice as that was drawn from the Old Testament and the actual Divine reason for it: Gethsemane shows the necessity for so doing. But, if He viewed His death in the light of the liii. of Isaiah, He must have thought of it as being in some sense an *’āshām*, or sacrifice for sin necessary for the triumph of His cause. He would also be led to associate it with sin if He held the belief which appears frequently in the Gospels that all suffering and death were due to sin. He ascribes the working of evil on men to Satan, and Satan only had this power because of men’s sin. His own death was in one aspect the work of Satan; it was Satan who had entered into Judas to prompt His betrayal; the

Son of Man was to be "delivered into the hands of sinners," it was "the hour and power of darkness." But this hour and power could only have been permitted to come to Him because of the sins of others. *He* had no consciousness of sin, and if death was thus coming to Him it must be on account of the sins of those with whom He was identified. All that the Evil Power was capable of effecting, all that that Power was suffered to do, was now to fall upon Him as the result of men's sin, but He, in submitting to it, should annul it for ever.¹

Next comes *Gethsemane*; and, knowing the thought that filled His mind, we can have little doubt concerning the significance of the agony there, and of His earnest pleading with the Father. His state of mind is described by the Evangelists in the most expressive terms: "He began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled, and He saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."² There was something in the cup given Him by His Father to drink, which, may we not reverently say, not

¹ May we not illustrate His feeling by a reference to the two greatest instances of self-sacrifice out of regard for others in the Bible—other than His own—that of Moses when he was willing that his name should be blotted out of the Lord's Book, and that of Paul, willing to be *anathema* for his brethren's sake. Moses and Paul were not more filled with the spirit of self-sacrificing love than Jesus was?

² "Ἦρξατο ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν—'He began to be sore amazed, and very heavy.' Θάμβος differs from θαῦμα both in excess of volume, being an overwhelming degree of astonishment, and also as containing a suggestion of alarm; and ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι is to go the whole length of such astonishment, and to be transported out of oneself by it. Ἀδημονεῖν denotes a kind of stupefaction and bewilderment, the intellectual powers reeling and staggering under the pressure of the ideas presented to them. This is what the Lord vouchsafed to undergo. The transition from imagination beforehand to actual experience was more than He could well bear, and He felt that it was killing Him. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." It took away His spiritual breath, so that His very prayers in those long hours in the Garden were but broken ejaculations, again and again repeated, saying the same words" (Dr. Mason, *The Conditions of Our Lord's Life on Earth*, pp. 136, 137).

only oppressed but terrified Him, so that He shrank back from it and prayed in an agony of earnestness, again and again, that, if it were possible, it might pass from Him. It could not be merely the thought that the Christ must die, for this had been long before His mind, and was quite accepted by Him. To have prayed that that necessity might pass from Him, would have been to go back on all that had been long settled in His own mind and declared to His disciples. It could not be purely physical suffering and the death of the Cross with its shame that He dreaded, although these were formidable enough. Jesus did not fall beneath His martyr disciples here, nor was He inconsistent with the brave words He had spoken to them concerning what only they should fear. He had bidden them put away fear of those who could kill the body but could not kill the soul: was it not something that seemed to threaten His very soul that He feared? Nor was it only the thought of His rejection by the people and His betrayal by a trusted disciple: these did not constitute "the cup" which was then held out to Him by the hand of His Father. Nor was it the thought that He must die, His destiny all unaccomplished (Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel, in loc.*), for we have already seen clear evidence that He looked to His death as that through which His cause should triumph. Nor is His attitude here that of one who goes forward wholly of His own motion to give Himself as a sacrifice that should, in a purely ethical sense, redeem His brethren. No; He would have pressed eagerly, even joyfully, onwards to this. Instead, we witness an awful fear take hold of Him, and a strong shrinking back from what He had to do. The cup was one *given Him by the Father* to drink; there was something in it which made Him afraid to take it into His hands, and it was only in obedience to the Father's unchangeable and ever-good will that He did so. There was not merely the rage of His

enemies against Him, and the sin of the people: *His Father* had given Him this awful cup. The Divine hand itself seemed raised against Him. As He said to His disciples on the way to Gethsemane, "It is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." Can we wonder at the dread which now came over Him? As already said, we can best understand this experience in the light of the thought of His soul (or His life) being made "an offering for sin," of His being about, not merely to die, but to die as one who "bears the sins of many." Perhaps all that was involved in this was not clear to the human mind of Christ. Perhaps He feared that it might involve separation from God, even utter death, although at other times He was confident of His personal triumph. It was the coming of the Kingdom—the salvation of men—that He was concerned for, and that should not fail, even if He Himself—; the thought was awful to Him. There was something, for certain, from which He shrank in such a way as only some such thought seems able to suggest a reason for. No doubt His prayer was that, if it was possible, the Kingdom might come without the necessity for His dying *thus*. But the fact that it *could not* come otherwise—that it was God's unalterable will that He should *so* die—shows most clearly and impressively that His sacrificial death on the Cross held a place of *deep necessity* in relation to the coming of the Kingdom of God. It was something which *must* be accepted, something which could not be dispensed with, even in the greatness of the Father's Love for this His perfect Son—something which, however dark, was laid upon Him of *necessity* by God, the Father of Love, and which therefore could not be removed, even by Him with Whom "all things are possible."

Then, if we have regard to His actual experience on the Cross, it is deemed one of the best authenticated facts in

the Gospels—"absolutely certain," according to the most unsparing criticism—that He died with that cry on His lips: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"¹

Too much weight must not indeed be allowed to this assertion, because this utterance, more than any other perhaps, favours that idea of the "simple humanity" of Jesus which certain forms of criticism seem bent on maintaining. The utterance is given by Mark and Matthew alone, having thus, it may be, only the single source here followed by those Evangelists. Schmiedel deems the experience quite in keeping with the true humanity of Jesus. No doubt we can understand even a temporary feeling of failure and despair coming over the most devoted Servant of God. But, since the most distinctive thing in Jesus was His undoubting filial confidence in the Heavenly Father—a consciousness of Sonship which made Him Divinely human—we can scarcely apply to Him what might be applicable to other persons. In any case a psychological explanation does not take anything away from the reality of the experience. As we shall see, it does not mean that Jesus was really forsaken by God and, in an ethical view of the Cross as the at-one-ment of God and man, there are reasons discernible why Jesus should have passed through such an experience. There is little doubt that the utterance was a cry wrung from the Saviour in view of what He was left to suffer at the hands of His enemies, and it was most probably a citation of the opening words of the twenty-second Psalm. That it was such a citation appears from the fact that Jesus was not in the habit of addressing His Heavenly Father as "My God," but as "Father," "Righteous Father"; in Gethsemane it was "O my Father!" or as Mark has it,

¹ According to Professor Schmiedel, this is one of the five "absolutely credible passages" in the Gospels concerning Christ (*Ency. Bibl.*, ii. col. 1881); but Schmiedel is emphatic in his repudiation of the thought that Jesus died in despair. (*Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 50f.).

the familiar, "Abba!" (Father). To think of Jesus as crying "My God! My God!" as the expression of His own personal feeling towards His Father would seem quite out of keeping with that sense of filial relationship which was so distinctive of Him. Moreover, the taunts thrown at Him, and the mockery with which He was assailed, were almost in the very words of this Psalm. Jesus, therefore, would have His thoughts carried to it and would feel that here, in His experience, it was having fulfilment, like those other Scriptures He had referred to. As already noted, the Psalm ends in triumph, in the accomplishment of the Divine purpose through what was suffered.

But however we may interpret this cry from the Cross, two things seem certain: Jesus was not really forsaken by His Father when He was, as then, doing His will to the uttermost, nor was He the object of the wrath of God towards sin. There could be no hiding of the Father's face from Him *as if* He were what He really was not. The cry is really a question, "Why hast Thou *left* me (as '*āzabh*' is often rendered)—why hast Thou thus left me to the will of mine enemies?" It is actuated by the same feeling as prompted the prayer in Gethsemane. The cup was not taken away, "Why am I left to drink such an awful cup as this?" But this is just the great question, *Why* was He left to this? Why in the counsels of God had He so to suffer before the Kingdom could come? There was much more than the severe physical agony in it; there was the awful thought of the rejection of the Kingdom by His people, the weight of their shameful ingratitude, the burden of their sin weighing on His soul, and other elements perhaps into which *we* cannot enter. If we cannot think of Jesus as being actually forsaken by God or treated as the Representative of sinners, it is certain that what He suffered there was the doing of sin, the result of sin in men's hearts, prompting this action on the

part of those who rejected Him. It was thus something inseparably connected with man's sin, the most impressive manifestation of what sin could work on the most righteous, and of what it was necessary for Him to endure if men were to be saved from sin. His soul was truly being "made an offering for sin," although this is not to be interpreted with a slavish literalism after the analogy of annual sacrifices. The experience that called forth the cry finds its surest interpretation in the concluding portion of the Psalm, which indeed gives the *answer* to the question of the opening verse and to which we seem to be pointed by our Lord's adoption of it: "For He hath *not* despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, *neither did He hide His face from him*. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee; for the Kingdom is the Lord's and He is the Ruler over the nations." It was certainly because of and through man's sin, for the redemption of men and that the Kingdom might come, that Jesus suffered as He did on that Cross. To see His experience thereon as undergone in the fulfilment of a Divine purpose of salvation and necessary thereto makes the cry a prelude to triumph instead of an utterance of despair. *Why* it was necessary; how His sacrifice had efficacy, and what was its real nature, are not yet apparent; and, in seeking to understand the subject more fully *in the light of these Gospels*, let us (1) consider the significance of the name by which our Lord always designated Himself, especially in connection with His death—"The Son of Man"; (2) seek the purport of that phrase, "The Remission of Sins"; and (3) view the subject in the light of our Lord's teaching concerning "the Kingdom of God."

CHAPTER IV

THE SON OF MAN

IF we would understand the view which Jesus entertained of the necessity for His death, we must take into account that term by which He chose always to designate Himself —“*the Son of Man.*” It is almost invariably in connection with this name that He speaks of His suffering and death. The questions, What He meant by this term, and whence He derived it, have been largely discussed, and they cannot be said to be finally settled.

It has been denied that Jesus ever applied the term to Himself personally. This is, as we have seen, Professor Pfleiderer's position. Professor Carpenter also, in *The Synoptic Gospels*, maintains that on the lips of Jesus the term “the Son of Man” was always used impersonally, being equivalent to “the Kingdom of God”; and in this way he believes that he “clears away from the Teacher all those charges of fanatical delusion which have been founded on the supposition that in predicting the ‘coming of the Son of Man’ He foretold His own return in clouds of glory.” “The coming of the Son of Man *is* the coming of the Kingdom of God. It is not the appearance of a person, it is the emblem of a great moral crisis, in which the Divine forces of love and truth will be displayed amongst men” (*The Synoptic Gospels*, p. 248, etc., and Appendix; 1st ed.). Support for this view is found in the substitution of “the Kingdom of God” for “the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom” in Mark ix. 1 and Luke

ix. 27, as compared with Matt. xvi. 28. But this only shows that "the coming of the Son of Man" and "the coming of the Kingdom" are so inseparable that the one event implies the other—not, by any means, that the one representation is exclusive of the other. It is essentially the same thing that is described by each of these phrases, and therefore they are used interchangeably. Certainly, the great thought of Jesus was the Kingdom of God, and He was far from claiming any honour or glory for Himself, apart from the Kingdom; but if He was conscious that the Kingdom had already come in Himself, as He sought to see it come in all men, the manifestation of the Kingdom in its power and glory was inseparable from His own manifestation as the representative of the Kingdom amongst men—not necessarily, however, by an *outward* coming in the clouds of heaven. It is possible that some of the Eschatological representations in the Gospels associated with "the coming of the Son of Man" are due to the disciples of Jesus rather than to Himself. But the saying of Jesus before the High Priest, given by all three Evangelists, and regarded by Professor Carpenter as substantially genuine, "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark xiv. 62), is most naturally regarded as having a personal reference,—it was so taken by the High Priest and Council, without any protest on the part of Jesus; and if He on this occasion so referred to Himself, He may have done the same on other occasions. There are many passages of which, as they stand, an impersonal interpretation is, as Professor Carpenter admits, "inappropriate, in fact impossible," and the presence of the term in these passages has to be explained as due to "the Church," which employed it to designate Jesus as the Messiah, although He never took to Himself either the title or the office. Professor Carpenter's ably conducted argument,

however, fails to convince us that all the forty separate applications of the term to Christ in the first three Gospels—many of them found in all three, the title being applied to Christ in the Fourth Gospel also—can be explained in the way suggested. The coming of the Son of Man and the coming of the Kingdom meant the same thing; but we can see no reason for throwing out the personal relation of Jesus to this coming of the Kingdom—taken, of course, not in a material but in a spiritual sense. Jesus probably never called Himself "*the Christ*": but was it not for this very reason that He designated Himself by that term "the Son of Man," which expressed to His mind what was really meant by "the Christ," and seemed more humble?

Dr. Martineau, while acknowledging the personal use of the term, holds that it always indicated the lowliness of the Teacher, and that it is never used in a Messianic sense (*The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 335 f.). But this sense is present, not only in the Eschatological passages, but even in those in which the lowliness is most prominent. "The Son of Man has not where to lay His head" implies a contrast with what might have been expected. The same contrast is implied in the saying, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark x. 45; compare Luke xxii. 27). If we may add such a saying as "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him," we have a clear identification with the Christ. So also in Mark xiv. 62, etc.

What, then, did Jesus mean by this name; why did He use it; and from whence did He derive it?

We may say, first, that in the present uncertainty concerning the date of the Similitudes in the Book of Enoch, where the term "the Son of Man" is frequently applied to the Messiah, we cannot with any confidence attribute it to such a source and the Gospels themselves seem to indicate

that it was not a commonly accepted term for the Messiah when Jesus appeared. There are two reasons which render it unlikely that Jesus adopted the term from the Book of Enoch. First, if that book was a current Apocalypse in the time of Christ, with the term "the Son of Man" applied to the Messiah, Jesus, by adopting that term, would have proclaimed Himself the Christ, which was contrary to His method; secondly, He would not only have proclaimed Himself the Christ, but would have suggested the idea that He was a Christ after the type of the Son of Man in Enoch. The figure of the Son of Man in that book, with the associations surrounding it, is not one that Jesus was likely to apply to Himself.

If, indeed, we had nothing but the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to guide us, it might seem at first sight that the title is simply a well-known Messianic one of which no explanation needs to be given, employed by Jesus from the first, and having its origin in the Book of Daniel. Still, even if this were so, He must have had some good reason for avoiding all other designations of the Messiah and for invariably calling Himself "the Son of Man." The Gospel according to Mark, however, suggests the explanation of its use on the part of Jesus.

As regards the literal and primary meaning of the term as it comes to us, there can, we think, be little doubt. In Biblical language, a "son of man" means simply "a man" (sometimes the phrase is employed in a poetical or exalted sense); therefore "*the* Son of Man," taken in this simple way, would naturally mean "*the* man" in some distinctive or pre-eminent sense. We have in the Gospels the phrase "the sons of men" (Mark iii. 28). According to a common Biblical and Jewish usage of the term "son," "the Son of Man" may also take up into itself the signifi-

cance of one who is truly man, in some sense the Representative of men, the man who is devoted to the things of men; just as to be "a son of God" is to be like God, and devoted to the things of God. In this sense we have "the sons of the Kingdom" spoken of in the Gospels by Christ, viz., those who have the characteristics of the Kingdom, to whom it truly belongs (Matt. viii. 12, xiii. 38); and these are contrasted with "the sons of the evil one"; "the sons of the bridechamber" (Matt. ix. 15); "a son of Gehenna" (Matt. xxiii. 15); "the *sons* of them who slew the prophets" (Matt. xxiii. 31). So Mary's child should be called "the Son of the Most High" (Luke i. 32), and men are called "sons of the Most High," and "sons of their Father Who is in Heaven," when they are like Him in love (Luke vi. 35; Matt. v. 45). A "son of peace" (Luke x. 6) is one who loves peace; the "sons of this age" and the "sons of light" (Luke xvi. 8) are so designated because of their moral qualities. So we have also "sons of God" and "sons of the Resurrection" (Luke xx. 36). Where Jesus is called "My Son," it is because He is "My chosen" (Luke ix. 36). The prodigal said, "I am no more worthy to be called thy *son*" (Luke xv. 21). When Jesus asked the scribes concerning "the Christ, whose *Son* is He?" He had probably the spiritual qualities or characteristics of the Christ in view. (For Jewish usage see Dalman on "The Sovereignty of God," *Words of Jesus*, pp. 115, 116).¹ "The Son of *Man*" would thus mean He who is man truly, and devoted to the real interests of men,—we might even say, the Champion and Representative of man; or, as Jesus Himself virtually expressed it, "*the Servant of Man*."

The idea that the term "Son of Man" contained in it

¹ Dalman remarks that the words actually standing in the Greek Gospels—ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου—would be understood by Greek readers as denoting the *human* descent of the Christ, and that it was probably for this reason that the term fell out of use by the Greek-speaking Church (*The Words of Jesus* (E. T.), p. 253).

a special reference to *humanity*, finds strong support in the fact made prominent by Wellhausen and other writers, and which Professor Pfeiderer alleges as a reason for rejecting the use of the term by Jesus entirely, viz., that in the Aramaic language, which Jesus spoke, the word most probably used by Him—*Bar-nāshā*—means simply “*man*” or “*the man*.” Jesus therefore, Wellhausen held, in calling Himself *Bar-nāshā*, “meant to convey that He had a unique filial consciousness towards God. This belonged to Him as *man*, and might therefore be shared by other men. Jesus meant to say that He was the typical man.” (*Vide* “The name Son of Man and the Messianic Consciousness of Jesus,” by the Rev. L. A. Muirhead, in *Expository Times*, xi. 62.) Apart from a certain abstractness suggested by the phrase “the typical man,” this seems really to state the truth concerning the consciousness of Jesus. And, although Dalman in his *Words of Jesus* controverts the statements of the writers referred to, there seems little doubt that *Bar-nāshā* meant *the man*.¹ But when it is, on the ground of this primary meaning of the term, denied (as it is by some) that Jesus used it Messianically, and that there was anything in Him more than in an ordinary man, “a simple humanity,” we are compelled to dissent. As we shall see, the term had with Jesus, from the first, a Messianic significance; and the idea of “a simple humanity,” separated from the Divine element, is the *ignis fatuus* which leads so many astray. Professor Schmiedel, while admitting its primary meaning as “man” simply, holds firmly to its Messianic sense also (see article by Muirhead, before cited, and *Ency. Bibl.*, ii., art. “Gospels”).

¹ *Vide* Dr. Driver’s exhaustive article on “Son of Man,” in Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv., where he says, “It thus appears that *Bar-nash(ā)* is a common Aramaic expression, in which the force of the *son* [*Bar*] has been so weakened by time as virtually to have disappeared, so that it practically means neither more nor less than *man*.” With the article it would be “the man.”

It would be strange if in a language like the Aramaic, in which the prefix *Bar* (son) played such a prominent part in the time of Christ, as the Gospels alone show us, it was impossible for one to be called "the Son of Man" in the emphatic sense in which Jesus could apply the term to Himself. If the Christ could be in that language called "the Son of David," or "the Son of a Star," or "the Son of the Fallen," why could He not also be spoken of as "the Son of *Man*"? Even if Jesus had to use the circumlocution which Professor Pfeiderer says He must have used in order to express this if He so designated Himself, *Bar debar nasha* (*Evolution and Religion*, p. 200), it would not have sounded strange to those whose language it was. And, as Professor Schmiedel points out, if the writers of the Greek Gospels made the mistake of translating "man" in the Aramaic by "the Son of Man" when it was used by Jesus, why did they not make the same mistake with other uses of the same word? In Mark ii. 27, 28, we have both "man" and "the Son of Man." But was it not, most probably, just the twofold significance of the term *Bar-nāshā*, meaning commonly "man," or "the man," simply, but capable also of carrying that special significance of "the Son of Man" which Jesus put upon it, that rendered it so obscure to the disciples and to the people, and that made it a term to serve our Lord's purpose, revealing yet concealing the truth concerning His Messiahship? If He believed that the true man and representative of men was the true Messiah, who was also, to His mind at least, spoken of in the Old Testament as "the Son of Man," Jesus would have had the best of reasons for adopting *Bar-nāshā* as His self-designation. Even if it had a special Messianic significance, He must have had a special reason for selecting it rather than "Son of David," or "Son of Abraham," or even "Son of God"; and that reason may have been because *Humanity* was that which this term expressed.

But, as Professor Bruce remarks (*Ency. Bibl.*, art. "Jesus"), "We must watch the Son of Man in the act of so designating Himself, defining the name by discriminating use." The earliest instance of its use is in the case of the paralytic, given by all three Evangelists (Mark ii. 10; Matt. ix. 6; Luke v. 24): "*But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power (authority) on earth to forgive sins.*" Jesus could not mean here directly and openly to proclaim Himself as *the Christ*, which would have been quite contrary to His practice; moreover, He would not have needed to give any *proof* of *the Christ's* authority to forgive. But if "the Son of Man" meant "*man*," or could have been so taken by His hearers, we should have a natural meaning given to His words. And it was *this* that was so astonishing, that, as Matthew tells us, "the multitude marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power (authority) *unto men*." Surely we have here an indication of how the term was understood. We can also thus see how to the scribes it savoured of blasphemy. At the same time, it certainly did not follow that all men, or any and every man, had this power or authority. It was claimed as man by One Who had within Himself the consciousness of realising man's true life in relation to God—*the* man, the true man, the Son of Man in the specific sense of the term—*that* man whom He knew Himself to be, and, as such, *the true Messiah*.

The second instance is equally clear. It occurs in Mark ii. 28 (Matt. xii. 8; Luke vi. 5): "*So that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.*" This certainly does not mean that *the Messiah* was so, in any external sense. Had Jesus claimed simply as Messiah to be Lord of the Sabbath, this would imply that He had already put Himself forward as such. But the reason for His claim with respect to the Sabbath day is distinctly given in Mark's account. It is expressly based on the fact that "the Sabbath was made

for (lit. through) *man*, and not man for (through) the Sabbath"; *therefore* the Son of Man (man in his truth, for whom the Sabbath was made) is the Master and Disposer of that which was made for his use. But, again, it cannot mean "any and every man," or that a man had a right to do as he liked with the Sabbath. It is true only of man in his truth—man in his true relation to God, the true man; therefore the Son and Representative of man in His truth, is Lord even of the Sabbath day. Jesus certainly meant to set Himself forth as *that* man, so that here again we have a Messianic reference in His own mind. These two instances show us clearly, we think, that when Jesus spoke of "the Son of Man" He meant "man in his truth," and that He had in it a personal reference to Himself as that man before God,—in other words, the Messiah, as He construed that term.

The passage in Matt. xvi. 13 is not so instructive as might at first sight appear. For instead of "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" or that "I, the Son of Man, am?" Mark and Luke have simply, "Who do men say that *I* am?" Moreover, Jesus *might* have meant to designate Himself as the Messiah when He said to Peter, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man (the Christ), am?" But it is more natural to take it as pointing simply to His Humanity. That was all that the name as yet revealed to most of those with whom He was in contact. His wonder was, that in Him—the *lowly Son of Man*, or the man simply—Peter should have been able to see the Christ of God, the Son of God; therefore He said, "Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven." The genuineness of the saying in Matthew, and the correctness of the above interpretation, are borne out by the fact that from this time forth—from the time that "the Son of Man" was identified in His disciples' mind with the Christ—Jesus "began to show them all that

the Son of Man (or the Christ) should suffer," and that henceforth the Messianic significance of the term comes out distinctly.

Why did Jesus adopt this name? and Whence to Him its Messianic significance? The reason for its adoption must have lain in the depths of our Lord's own self-consciousness.¹ For any one to go forth calling Himself "*the man*," or "*the Son of Man*," implies that He had within Himself the consciousness of being that which the name denotes. It expresses that which we all continually ascribe to Christ—a true and full or perfect Humanity, and love for man as man. This is one of the elements of that unique consciousness of Christ which we find it difficult fully to grasp, because it does not belong to ourselves. It marks Him off from all other men, while at the same time it declares His complete and full Humanity. And it blends with His Divine consciousness, so that it is its other, or manward, side, so to speak. The Son of Man is such because He is also, or rather, first of all, the Son of God—man standing in true and full filial consciousness towards God. And both sides are united in the undoubtedly Messianic term, "*the Son*" (Mark xiii. 32; Matt xi. 27). It is not, indeed, as if in Christ's mind there was formed the philosophical or theological conception of "*the Ideal man*"; but none the less was He conscious of Himself as the man who knows God truly as Father, who has in this realised the true and full life of Humanity, into whose heart the Kingdom of God has come in its truth, and whose mission it is to call His brethren to the realisation of this true Humanity, and so to bring in the Kingdom of God. This was His

¹ As Professor Orr remarks, "We must hold it for certain that the expression was one welling up from the depths of the original consciousness of Jesus, and expressing some profound conception of His mission" (art. "Kingdom of God," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, ii. 850).

conception of the Messiah; and He was led to it, we believe, in a perfectly natural way—given, first of all, of course, the uniqueness of His consciousness. He lived at a time when His people were feeling keenly their long-continued oppression, and were becoming increasingly restive under it; when many were earnestly longing and praying for the promised Messiah and the coming of the Kingdom of God; and when some, utterly misconceiving its nature, were seeking to bring it in by force, only thereby making their sufferings worse. The loving heart of Jesus felt for His people, and, as He pondered the Scriptures and sought the teaching of God His Father, He was led to the conviction that it was not the Roman power that was their real enemy, but their ignorance, worldliness, and sinfulness before God; that the true Kingdom of God must mean, primarily, the reign of God in men's hearts, and that the true Christ—the Messiah they were longing for—was simply He who should be completely devoted to God and His Kingdom—to the service of God and of man—no “Son of David” or of Abraham, with national interests in His heart, but simply the true *Son of Man*. He felt that the time was come to go forth and proclaim the nearness of God's Kingdom. It had never been far away, but was only waiting for *the man* who should realise it in Himself, in perfect filial union with God, and who should go forth to bring it in for His brethren. He felt Himself called of God to this task, and believed that, although only “a weak son of man,” God would uphold Him and enable Him to accomplish His mission. He put away from Him all the conceptions which the popular notions had gathered around the Christ, and, simply as *the man* to whom was given a full filial consciousness towards God and the true knowledge of His Kingdom, He came forward to His task. Therefore we find Him asking the scribes, Whose Son the Christ should be? and showing how completely He differed from

them. In His mind, the Christ was no Son of David, but simply the Son of Man. We hear Him also asking those who told Him that His mother and brethren were seeking Him, "Who is My mother and My brethren?" and asserting that "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." He Who said this certainly regarded Himself as representing the higher kinship of a true Humanity—a Humanity realising its truth in relation to God. It is noteworthy also that in the account which Matthew gives of "the Temptation," while the Tempter addresses Him by the popular Messianic title, "the Son of God"—"if Thou be the Son of God"—Jesus always answers him, and meets all the temptations simply as *man*. "*Man* shall not live by bread alone. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." This interpretation is also in harmony with His description of Himself as "meek and lowly in heart," as come, "not to be served, but to serve," and, indeed, with His whole teaching concerning man in his relation to God. God was the Father, and man in his truth was the son of God. Why, then, should not the true Christ be *the man* who should bring in God's Kingdom? As He said to His disciples, "Be ye the sons of your Father, Who is in Heaven." The true son of man was also the true son of God. Here the term comes into relation with the popular and (rightly understood) *true* belief that the Messiah should be the Son of God, and also with the representation of the Prophets that He was to be the Servant of God—the Representative of that Israel which was in its truth at once the Son and the Servant of Jehovah. He Who knew himself to be the Son of God, in the Biblical sense, would also know Himself to be that "Servant of God" who should bring in the Kingdom. There were many other points of contact between the consciousness of being the Son of God and

the Son of Man, and the representations of the Messiah in the Old Testament. Chief of all, perhaps, there was the passage in Dan. vii. 13, from which it is very generally agreed to-day that the term Son of Man was derived either directly or indirectly: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and He came even unto the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given unto Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," etc. Here Jesus would find the term "Son of Man" in His own native Aramaic—the very words we are assured He used—*Bar-nāshā* (*Bar'ēnāsh*), only with the prefix ܐ, translated "like," but which it has been suggested may be the equivalent of the Hebrew, *Kaph veritatis*: "a veritable, real Son of Man." (See article on Dalman's *Die Worte Jesu* by Professor Marshall, in *Expository Times*, x. 324.) This reference to Daniel has been questioned, chiefly on the ground that in the passage in Daniel it is not "*the* Son of Man" that is spoken of, but only "one like a son of man," viz., a man. (See Discussion in Dr. Driver's *Daniel*, "Cambridge Bible for Schools.") But this would be no objection if the Christ, in Jesus' view, was a man in His true relation to God. On the contrary, if Jesus understood it thus—as simply denoting "a man"—it would be a reason for His adopting it *as expressive of the true Messiahship* as He conceived it. It is further objected, that it is *the nation* of Israel that is there represented by a human form—a man—instead of a beast, as was the case with the other nations. "It denotes," says Dr. Driver, "the glorified and ideal people of Israel." This, however, would be no reason against its Messianic adoption by Christ. He regarded Himself as the true Representative and Head of the nation. It was in Him as the man who stood in perfect filial relation to God that the ideal of the nation was realised. The case is precisely the same as that with reference to the Servant of

Jehovah, which term also primarily represents the ideal Israel. Nor is the fact that the expression, literally taken, only denotes "a man," a reason against its Messianic adoption on the part of Christ. It depends on what was His conception of the true Christ of God. It is admitted that the title was at an early date interpreted personally and applied to the Messiah, although it is generally agreed that in the time of Christ it was not a popular Messianic designation. Of course, *if* the Similitudes in the Book of Enoch are pre-Christian, and *if* they were known to Christ, this might help to its Messianic use in the Gospels, and *possibly* in the case of Christ Himself. As Dr. Sanday suggests (*Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Jesus"), its usage may have been limited to a particular circle. In that case we may believe, with Dr. Charles, that Christ put a higher meaning into the term, freeing it from all Pharisaic ideas, and combining with it the conception of the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah, so that "these two conceptions, though outwardly antithetic, are, through the transformation of the former, reconciled and fulfilled in a deeper unity—in the New Testament Son of Man,"—giving us at once the greatness and the lowliness implied in the name as used by our Lord in the Gospels. (See *Expository Times*, iv. 301, and article by Dr. Vernon Bartlett, in *Expositor*, 4th Series, vi. 427.) But we can see no need for going to the Book of Enoch for the title, and cannot regard it as likely that Jesus drew it from thence: the Old Testament is quite sufficient, along with the consciousness of Christ.

In any case, the adoption of the term by our Lord would be further strengthened by its use in Ezekiel, who, while a weak "son of man," received abundance of Divine revelations, and by its use in the Psalms, not only in the 8th Psalm, but still more notably in the 80th Psalm, vers. 17 and 18: "Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand; upon the son of man, whom Thou madest strong for

Thyself.”¹ This passage was Messianically interpreted in the Targums, and, as it would be rendered in the Synagogues in the time of Christ, “the son of man” would be that very *Bar-nāshā* which He is believed to have used of Himself. In these two verses, indeed, we have both “the man” and “the son of man,” and it is extremely probable that, while the passage in Daniel was the chief source of the term, this passage in the Psalms had great weight with our Lord. Both passages imply that the Kingdom must come primarily from God to the Son of Man, and if Jesus had specially in view the representation in Daniel of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of Heaven, while yet He was a true *man*, we can see how certainly it must have appeared to Him that He must first of all die, although, later, His death became invested for Him with the deeper sacrificial significance which is set forth in Isaiah liii. in particular.²

¹ Attention was directed to this passage, in this connection, by Professor Nestle, in an interesting Note in *The Expository Times* for February 1900 (vol. xi. p. 238). In the 15th verse also the word rendered “branch” (itself a Messianic designation) is “Son” in the Hebrew (marg. R.V.).

² It is gratifying to find that a similar view of Christ’s use of the term “the Son of Man” is maintained by Von Paul Fiebig, Lic. Th., in a recent publication on the subject (*Der Menschensohn, etc.*), an account of which is given by the Rev. James Croskery, M.A., in *The Expository Times* for May 1902. Fiebig considers that Dalman’s treatment of the subject is not adequate. All the words for “man” in the Aramaic are ambiguous, and it is not proved that *Bar* had lost all its force. “Jesus used the name of Himself, but the expression was ambiguous, and might be misunderstood.” The Gospels presuppose the name as well known and readily understood. But Jesus did not openly proclaim Himself Messiah. “The solution of the riddle is that, whenever Jesus used it, it was always possible for those who heard it to misunderstand Him, while believing that they understood. Jesus Himself availed Himself of the inherent ambiguity of the name (cf. Mark ii. 10).”

Schweitzer holds that the problem is solved by supposing that in the authentic passages (which go back to Daniel) in which Jesus used the term of Himself He neither veiled His Messiahship nor transformed it, but applied it to Himself as destined to be realised at His coming, in

It may be added that there are some suggestions in the Gospels that the term "the Son of Man" may have served as a veiled title for the Christ as "the Son of God," after the Jewish manner of refraining from the use of the Divine name. Did not the High Priest understand it as being equivalent to "the Son of God"? Was not this the *blasphemy* which he charged to Christ? So, "the Son of Man has power (authority) *on earth* to forgive sins," and in those passages where a contrast is implied between the lowliness of His condition and service and His real dignity. Our Lord is seldom designated "the Son of God" in the Gospels—very seldom by His disciples; and although He manifests such a complete filial consciousness as distinguishes Him from His disciples, He never takes to Himself that title. But it is implied in His self-designation as "the Son." In the Fourth Gospel the term the "Son of Man" is applied to our Lord in His *Divine* relations. According to Paul, "the Son of God" was the designation, not merely of the exalted but of the promised Messiah. Dalman remarks that "for a long time he considered it possible that 'Son of Man' might be a paradoxical term for 'Son of God,' adducing some Jewish parallels" (*The Words of Jesus*, p. 266, note). But even if this could be established, it would not militate against the *human* significance contained in the term as employed by Christ. It would rather be used by Him just because of His conscious identity with Humanity, which identity belonged, in His view, essentially to the true Christ. In His view, distinctly stated, *e.g.* Matt. v. 45, a true son of man was also a son of God; nay, was a son of God as being a true son of man.

We conclude, therefore, that by this title our Lord incant to designate Himself as the Messiah or Christ; but such a way that only the initiated understood that He was referring to His own coming. (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 281).

that the term was one which, meaning as it did primarily "man" or "the man," would at first cause wonderment, lead to inquiry, and only through spiritual discernment be seen to be identical with the Christ, Who, it would be discovered, was so designated in the Old Testament, if indeed He was not also already so spoken of in certain Jewish circles. To Jesus Himself it was, without doubt, an Old Testament designation of the Messiah. But the deepest ground for the adoption of the name was in His own consciousness and in His belief as to what the true Christ really was, namely, *the man who realises the truth of manhood in its filial relation to God*, and who in love comes forth to serve his brethren. This does not imply any "philosophical reflection" on the part of Jesus, but only such love for God and man, and such a high estimation of the value of man before God, as are characteristic of the mind of Christ. Deepest of all, there was in our Lord's heart the feeling of *Humanity*—a Divine Humanity, it is true, but, just because it was such, the fountain of a wondrous love for man—a self-identification with man to the uttermost, and an unsparing self-devotion to his cause as God's child. Account for the origin of this name as we may,—and this is, after all, a secondary matter,—this strong irrepressible feeling for Humanity in its truth, of love for man as God's child, and devotion to his cause, comes out in almost every use of it by our Lord. The Son of Man has power (or authority) on earth to forgive sins, and to heal the sufferings of afflicted Humanity; the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day, and claims it in its Divinely meant freedom for poor priest-ridden, scribe-burdened man. The Son of Man is the true Christ, ready even to take up His Cross and die for man. The Son of Man has not where to lay His head; but it matters not, so long as He can serve and save His brethren. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost. The

Son of Man is come, not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. The Son of Man must go as it is written of Him—in His devotion to the cause of Humanity. He must do for man all that he needs to have done, and He is ready even to give Himself up to death, if by this means only men can be redeemed and the Kingdom of God come in its power. *Then* shall the Son of Man rise from the dead; *then* shall He be seated at the right hand of God, and come in His power and glory; *then* shall the Kingdom of God come to men in all its gracious might, and man shall be saved with an eternal salvation. All this leads us to see, deep in the consciousness of Christ, a unique sense of relationship to Humanity, such as entitles Him to use that name, "the Son of Man," as it could be used by none other. Even although He had never employed it to designate Himself, we should still see in Him, with His perfect Humanity, *the Son of Man* in the truest sense, the child that was to be born to the people, He upon whose shoulders should be the government, the perfect flower and fruition of all God's working in Humanity, the Son of God and of man, the Head and true Representative of mankind. Whatever needed to be done for man, in order that he might be redeemed and find his true place in the eternal Kingdom of the Father,—*that*, He who felt Himself to be the true *man* in filial relation to God—the Head and Lover of all men—was able and ready to do. And so, in relation to God, whatever was required of the true Servant of God, who should bring in the Kingdom, that He was willing to perform. "The Son of Man" and "the Son of God" were thus correlative terms, their significance uniting in the consciousness of Him who felt Himself to be "the Son" both of man and of God, and therefore devoted to both and "the Servant" of both.

CHAPTER V

THE REMISSION OF SINS

THE "remission of sins" is the great *primary* distinguishing feature of the Gospel Dispensation—that through which everything else comes to us. It was equivalent to the coming of God in the Grace of His Kingdom *unto* salvation. In the beautiful language ascribed to Zacharias, in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, God had "visited His people," and his son John was to "go before the face of the Lord, to make ready His ways; to give the knowledge of salvation unto His people *in the remission of their sins*, because of the tender mercy of our God, wherein the day-spring from on high hath visited us; to shine upon them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace." It was *in* this "remission of sins" that the *salvation* should come to them. John went forth, "preaching repentance unto the remission of sins": Jesus died that it might come in all its Divine fulness to men. His blood was "shed for many, unto remission of sins."

It is very important that we should rightly understand this great primary fact of the Gospel—the *remission of sins*. For if we do so, some difficulties which are felt with reference to "the Atonement" will be cleared away, and much light will be thrown on the nature of the Gospel and of the salvation that comes to us through Christ.

1. We remark, in the first place, that it is *something much more than merely individual Forgiveness on repentance*. The sacrifice of Christ has been frequently represented as a condition necessary for individual forgiveness, and it has often been urged as an objection to the Cross, in the Evangelical sense, that there is no mention in the Old Testament of the need of any such act on man's behalf in order to the Divine Forgiveness of penitent sinners, and that the sacrifices under the Levitical law had reference to ceremonial transgressions only—not to moral transgressions, for which there was no provision, and from the consequences of which nothing could save except repentance. Now, without doubt, the Old Testament is full of declarations of God's readiness to forgive returning sinners. Everywhere He is declared to be a God of mercy and of pardoning grace. His name, as it was proclaimed to Moses, was "the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ex. xxxiv. 6; see also Joel ii. 13, Micah vii. 18, etc.): "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18): "There is," cried the Psalmist, "Forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared"; "The Lord is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Ps. cxxx. 4, ciii. 8, etc.): "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2): "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. lv. 7);—this was the dominant note of the Old Testament religion. All that was wanted was repentance on the sinner's part. The principle of the Divine action is laid down by Ezekiel: "If the wicked turn from all his

sins that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (xviii. 21, etc.). The same principle is applied to *the nation* by Jeremiah (xviii. 7, 8). Never is there the least hint of any difficulty on the part of God as to Forgiveness, or of the need of any sacrifice to procure it or to make it possible; if only the sinner would return from his evil ways he should certainly be forgiven and "live before God: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you;" this was the word of the Lord to sinners. It was the same in Christ's teaching. God was the gracious Father, sorrowing over His wandering children, and longing for their return to Himself. When the prodigal comes home he finds his father waiting with open arms to receive him, and the kiss of Forgiveness is bestowed out of the overflowing love of the paternal heart, without any mention of a sacrifice or offering for his sin; and Jesus Himself dispensed Forgiveness to sinners freely, as He Who proclaimed that Kingdom of God which was founded on the Divine Forgiveness. No sufficient reply can be made to this, and Theology has created a great and needless difficulty and confusion, in the way of the apprehension of an Evangelical conception of the Cross, by failing to distinguish between individual Forgiveness on repentance and the great Divine act of *Remission of Sins*, which the Gospel proclaims, and which made the sacrifice of Christ a necessity. This has been one of the most unfortunate misunderstandings that has ever crept into our Theology. When the truly penitent sinner says, "I will arise and go to my Father," are we to say to him that God will not accept him without a sacrifice for his sins? Is there no Forgiveness with God for His returning children? The natural conscience which witnesses for God in every man, and that fatherliness in our own hearts to which Jesus pointed as a reflection of the heart of the great Father of us all, rightly resent the suggestion that a sacrifice is necessary before God can forgive

the penitent sinner; and the plain teaching of the Old Testament, and that of our Lord Himself, forbid the thought. It is far also (as we shall see) from the teaching of Paul. But meanwhile we keep to the Gospels.

To say that the Divine Forgiveness of penitent sinners was all along grounded on the sacrifice of Christ, foreseen and foreordained of God and typified by all the sacrifices and partial atonements of the Old Testament, is not a sufficient explanation. It is more like a resource to meet an obvious difficulty. While it is profoundly true that the sacrifice of Christ was foreordained of God,—yea, that He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,”—this does not alter the fact that *repentance* is the only thing required for the Forgiveness of individual transgressions, whether in the Old Testament or in the teaching of Christ; and to say that such Forgiveness was only administered on the ground of something held in reserve in the Divine mind, is to introduce an artificial element into our thought of God in His dealings with men. St. Paul’s saying that the Cross was the manifestation of God’s righteousness, in view of “the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God,” is in no contradiction to this. Such a “passing over” of sins is a very different thing from the Forgiveness of sins on the repentance of the sinner. Besides, as already noted, the sacrifices of the Old Testament had no relation to real sin and righteousness, but to ceremonial transgressions in relation to the Divine Sanctity or “Holiness” in this sense.

2. *It is sometimes denied that Forgiveness is possible at all.* We are told that there is no Forgiveness in Nature, and that there can be none under a strictly moral government—nay more, that facts show that there is none; every sin is followed by its punishment, visible or invisible; the sinner must “eat of the fruit of his ways”; “whatsoever a

man sows, that shall he also reap." Of course, if Forgiveness be not possible, the Gospel message is only a dream, and a dangerous and delusive one too, if it be taken for a reality. If there be no Forgiveness, there is no room for the exercise of *mercy* with God; there is no hope of salvation for the sinner, save as it may be possible for him to work it out in some way, through bearing the punishment of his sins. But this would not be a moral, but an *immoral*, system of government; if forgiveness cannot be extended to the penitent sinner, then that which the conscience feels to be morally right, and a part of justice itself, is impossible; if God cannot show mercy, He is less than man; that which is the noblest attribute of man, "mightiest in the mightiest," "enthroned in the heart of kings," cannot be ascribed to God Himself; we can no longer say that—

"Earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice."

A right conception of what is meant by the "remission of sins" would remove this difficulty also.

✓ To say with Dr. Moberly¹ that Forgiveness is always conditioned by *Forgivableness*, does not meet the case; it is to state only one side of the truth; and it obscures the richness and freeness of the Divine Gospel in Christ. So far as the moral and spiritual well-being of the person is concerned—so far as affects his apprehension of it and benefit from it—Forgiveness is conditioned by Forgiveness; but a person may be completely forgiven by him whom he has offended or sinned against, even though he is in himself by no means forgivable. Dr. Moberly, indeed, maintains that there is a *provisional* Forgiveness which may be revoked. But a provisional Forgiveness is hard to conceive, and cannot be associated with God as He is revealed to us. We shall see immediately how the Scripture repre-

¹ *Atonement and Personality*, chap. iii., etc.

sentations that suggest such a provisional Forgiveness are to be understood, and how the truth that *underlies* Dr. Moberly's statements is upheld. But such a provisional Forgiveness cannot agree either with our own Divinely implanted sense of duty, or with the precepts and example of Christ. It is our duty to forgive, even though there should be no Forgivableness as yet manifested on the part of the offender. Although we may know him to be utterly unworthy, he is to be forgiven, so far as we are concerned. We must, Christ taught, "forgive every one his brother from our hearts" (Matt. xviii. 35). *From our hearts*, with no reservations, although it may not be necessary to proclaim this to him, unless he "turns again and says, I repent." The truth is, not that *the Forgiveness* does not go forth, but that the person does not benefit by it unless he becomes forgivable. He is forgiven, so far as the person injured or offended is concerned, but not, so far as he himself is concerned. He has not appropriated or taken to himself the Forgiveness, and he can only do this *really* in the measure in which he is forgivable. Provisional Forgiveness would be no real Forgiveness at all. And so the Divine Forgiveness is not provisional, but real and full; only, it does not take effect—moral and spiritual effect—unless the person becomes forgivable. As Dr. Moberly says, it can "only go forth with the motive of establishing righteousness"; but it may fail of its purpose, for it is possible to "receive the grace of God in vain." ✓

3. The Remission of Sins which Jesus died to bring in was not merely something that men had always been familiar with, but *something new*. It was that which was to be the great distinguishing feature of the Kingdom of God as the Messianic Kingdom. Israel was God's Covenant people, whom He had engaged to bless *if* they kept their part of the Covenant. But they had broken the

Covenant, and therefore the blessing had been lost by them. The glory had departed from the nation; they were in a condition of subjection and in circumstances of suffering. The better minds of the people were conscious that it was their sin that had separated them from their God and had caused their miseries. Again and again, in the later portions of the Old Testament, do we find this confession, and the frequent prayer ascends to Heaven that God would forgive the sins of His people. The gracious announcement had been made, that the time was coming when God *would* forgive their sins, drawing nigh to them in His mercy, establishing a new and better, even an everlasting, Covenant, with them that should not be broken, bringing in "everlasting Righteousness."¹ A new Dispensation of Grace had been promised, and the great Messianic prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah—the Book of Consolations—opens with the assurance that the time had come when favour should be shown to Israel: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; that she hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sins" (Isa. xl. 1, 2). All throughout the book this note is sounded, and the strongest assurances are given of its reality: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, for Mine own name's sake; and I will not remember thy sins" (xliii. 25): "Remember these things, O Jacob; and Israel, for thou art My servant . . . I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and,

¹ The difference between Forgiveness in the Old Testament, *as actually experienced*, and that which was to come in the New Dispensation, is well stated by Oehler. It did not rest on "an objective and permanent atonement *obtained for the Church*, it did not establish any permanent state of reconciliation." It did not bring an *indwelling of the Spirit*; working from within as the transforming principle of the whole man, so that *the conquest of death and everlasting life were effected*. It did not raise men to full Divine Sonship (*Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 310-312). So also Dörner.

as a cloud, thy sins : return unto Me ; for I have redeemed thee " (xliv. 22). It is made quite plain that it was not on the ground of their repentance that this favour was shown, but "*for Mine own name's sake*," and in order *that they might* repent, or "return" to their God. (See also the strong statements in Ezek. xvi. 61, 63, xx. 43, 44, xxxvi. 31, 32 : "*Then shall ye remember your evil ways*," etc.) They were to be forgiven freely, out of God's mercy, *before* their repentance, and the result should be their devotion to God. The New Covenant of Jeremiah was to be founded on this Divine act of forgiveness. Its reason is given in these words : "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (xxxi. 34) ; and again we read, "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me" (xxxiii. 8). So, in Zech. iii. 9, it is said, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" ; and again (xiii. 1), "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (See also Dan. ix. 24.) And, as we have seen, it was through that Representative of the ideal Israel, as the Servant of Jehovah, that this Covenant should be established—he who was "given for a Covenant to the people," whose soul should be made "an offering for sin," and by whose knowledge "the righteousness" should come "to many" (Isa. liii., etc.).

Jesus Christ went back to these Divine assurances in His proclamation of the Kingdom. But what has not been always sufficiently noted is, that these are all promises of Forgiveness *before* Repentance, and that they are all addressed to *a nation*, to *a people* (or a church or community), not promises or assurances of individual forgiveness on repentance. Such Forgiveness had always been open to individuals, and needed no special proclamation. Had there been nothing in the Gospel beyond this, there would have been nothing

transcending the *general* teaching of the Old Testament, or even the current teaching of the Jewish Rabbis of the time of Christ. They all preached repentance, and forgiveness as consequent thereupon. They were particularly strong and emphatic in this; and it was a common belief that, if Israel would only truly repent, even for one day, the Messiah would come with all the blessings of the Kingdom of God. (See Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, i. 169, 509.) John the Baptist, too, who was only the forerunner of Christ, had preached "*Repentance* for the remission of sins." Did Jesus not go beyond this—the common teaching of His time? Did He not go back in spirit to those great prophetic intimations, which declared that Forgiveness should be something wholly of Divine Grace towards sinners pitied and pardoned by God; that, while it was not irrespective of suffering, endured as the consequence of sin, it should come, not in virtue of their repentance, but *wholly* "for His name's sake"; that it should be based, not on anything in man, but on God's mercy, and be the great motive power to lead men to repentance and to salvation. As Oehler says truly, "It is through the pardon of sin that occasion is afforded for *the agency of those* (new) purifying and sanctifying forces which God puts forth" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27, etc.). Jesus, too, had preached Repentance at the outset of His ministry, but He had found the human heart too hard to be melted by mere appeal; some stronger motive would be necessary, *even the free Forgiveness of God as it should go forth to men through His Cross*. God cannot wait till men come by repentance to Him. He must come Himself first to them in His Grace. That God *does* so come, is the distinctive message of the Gospel. As Dr. Edersheim has said, "The fundamental difference between Christianity and all other systems, notably Rabbinism, appears in these two things—the forgiveness of sin and the welcome to the sinner." In no

other system is there any welcome to the sinner, "till by some means he have ceased to be a sinner and become a penitent. They would first make him a penitent, and then bid him welcome to God; Christ first welcomes him to God, and so makes him a penitent. The one demands, the other imparts, life. And so Christ is the Physician whom they that are in health need not, but they that are sick. And so Christ came to call, not the righteous, but sinners—not to repentance, as our common text erroneously puts it in St. Matt. ix. 13 and St. Mark ii. 17, but to Himself, to the Kingdom; and this is the beginning of Repentance" (*Life and Times of Jesus*, i. 507). This, then, is the new and distinctive thing in the Gospel; it is not an announcement of the readiness of God to forgive the penitent, but *the proclamation of the drawing nigh of God in a new way of mercy to all men*, forgiving their sin, and coming *in* that remission of their sins to save them. It is the proclamation of the Divine Forgiveness to all, without exception, if they will only avail themselves of it. The Cross was not needed in order that God might be able to forgive the sins of repentant sinners (and all those theories that have sought to explain it on this supposition have simply mistaken the fundamental significance of the Gospel declaration of Forgiveness); it was needed in order that He might come in remission of the sins of the entire nation and of the world at large. We have in it something very much more than what we see in the forgiveness of the repentant prodigal who comes to his father. We have the drawing nigh of the Father Himself with the word of Forgiveness to His sinful, wandering, and unrepentant children, to win them to Himself, to lead them to Repentance, to bring them home to the House of that loving Father whom they had foolishly forsaken. It was this that made manifest the drawing nigh of God in the Kingdom of His Grace, to make a New Covenant with men whom He had forgiven—coming "*in* the remission of

sins to their salvation"; and it was largely in this that the power lay, to bring the Kingdom in its spiritual and abiding might into human hearts. The Cross was not necessary in order that God might forgive individual repentant sinners, but that He might proclaim Forgiveness to the whole world.

4. Here we also see the true nature of the Gospel in relation to the *possibility of Forgiveness* and to the punishment of sin. Sin is, no doubt, its own punishment, and there are some of the consequences of sin that cannot be remitted. This is true of all such consequences as follow from our involvement in the flesh and our subjection to "Laws of Nature." These cannot be remitted, nor changed, except in so far as Nature herself permits of the action of healing and restorative influences—which she does to a large degree. But, while man is so far bound up with Nature, he also stands in a personal relation to God. God has not only given us a life that is governed by the causal successions of Nature, He also stands in a personal Fatherly relation to us. The worst consequence of sin is that it separates us from God, and makes necessary our exclusion from that Divine and Eternal Kingdom into which sin cannot enter, and in which alone our life and destiny as the children of God can be found in their fulness. The Divine Forgiveness is God's taking us, even though sinful, into reconciliation or acceptance with Himself, as His sons and the heirs of His Eternal Kingdom. While, therefore, those consequences which result from our relation to Nature (*e.g.*, suffering, self-deterioration, physical death) cannot be remitted, the worst and most serious consequences of sin—our separation from God and our exclusion from His Kingdom—*may* be remitted. And through such remission healing influences can be brought into play, such as shall truly *save* the sinner and richly bless the world. Even though there remain certain consequences that cannot be

removed, these can be taken up into and become instruments in that great work of our salvation which God in Christ has graciously undertaken.

We see thus that *pardon is not immunity from all punishment, nor from all the consequences of sin*, although, *ultimately*, it will issue for all who come to God in a complete Salvation. It still stands true, that he who sins shall suffer; consciously or unconsciously to himself, his sin takes effect upon him; "whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." It is, indeed, only when a man has been brought to God, and his sins have been seen in their true light in relation to both God and man, that he begins to experience certain forms of punishment. The conscience that was dead before is now fully awakened, so that he will see his sins as he has never seen them before, and he will experience a lifelong regret and inward misery at their remembrance. Only, it is not the agony of a hopeless remorse; it is not "the sorrow of the world that worketh death," but that which, under God, ministers to his Salvation. Even though he believes that God forgives him, he may never be able to forgive himself, and although confident of God's mercy, he may constantly pray to be forgiven. But in all this he is only being brought the nearer to God, and is being the better fitted for the Eternal Kingdom. On the other hand, he who persists in sinning, instead of yielding himself up to the God and Father Who draws nigh so graciously to him,—the man who "receives the grace of God in vain,"—excludes himself both from the benefits of the present Love of God and from the future Eternal Kingdom. It is *thus* that he is punished, not by a direct Divine infliction, but through the inevitable consequences of his own sin, *in spite* of the Fatherly Love of God.

5. The true conception of "the Remission of Sins" is a matter of so great importance for the right understanding

of the Gospel, that we may with profit dwell on it a little longer. It is the same thing as that which Paul sets forth under the positive form of "Righteousness" or "Justification." In his view, the Cross was the means by which quite a *new Dispensation of Religion* was ushered in, based on a new revelation of the relation of God to the sinful world; a new Dispensation of Grace, as distinguished from Legalism; of Mercy, as opposed to "wrath"; of the Spirit, as distinguished from all mere powerless externalism—a new relation to men that God had entered on through the Cross of Christ. It was the drawing nigh of God *in Forgiveness* to the whole sinful world; the Forgiveness was *there*, in Christ, for every sinner to take to himself. And not Forgiveness only, but "Righteousness." God "was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," not only "*not imputing* their trespasses unto them," but making them "the Righteousness of God in Christ"; making all who would believe and accept His Grace, the members of His spiritual family and Eternal Kingdom. It had to do, primarily, not with the individual sinner, but with the whole sinful *world*; it was the proclamation of a *universal amnesty* from God to men, a Divine provision of pardon and of justifying Righteousness for every sinner—"unto all and upon all them that believe"; it was the end of an old order and the beginning of a new one—the end of "the Law" and the introduction of "Grace." Paul says nothing about Repentance in connection with the Gospel Salvation: in his view, to say that men must *repent* before God would forgive them, would have been to introduce a form of "our own Righteousness" instead of that "Righteousness of God" which was through faith in Jesus Christ. All that the sinner had to do was to believe in and appropriate the Divine declaration of Forgiveness and provision of Righteousness in Christ. Let him draw nigh to God—be reconciled to God—as God came to him in Christ, and the Grace of God would do its own

work in his soul. His reception of pardon and righteousness and peace depended on nothing whatever in himself, but wholly on the Grace of God in Christ Jesus. Paul's doctrine was thus exposed to the reproach of Antinomianism, and of giving encouragement to sin, on the part of those who were still under legal ideas of God, and who had "a zeal for Righteousness, but not according to knowledge." But Paul held on his way unswervingly, never abating one jot of the freeness of the Grace of God, knowing, from what he had found in experience and had seen as the result of his preaching, that this Gospel was indeed "the power of God unto *Salvation*," and that it wrought in men "repentance not to be repented of."

But after Paul's day the old legal spirit again asserted itself, and gained such power over men that the free Gospel of God's Grace became obscured, and ultimately a Gospel of Salvation by works was substituted for it; Repentance itself becoming penance, and even the merciful Saviour being transformed into a stern Judge. It is an old and familiar story, this; but its lesson has not been sufficiently laid to heart. The Reformers again proclaimed Salvation by faith alone; but "the unconditional freeness of the Gospel" has not always been distinctly and clearly maintained. Rather, the whole subject of Grace and Salvation became matter of the most prolix disputation, so that the Gospel could not go forth to sinful men in all its Divine freeness as that unfettered "Grace of God that bringeth Salvation to all men." This was largely the result of the fear of "Antinomianism" and of a zeal for Righteousness which, like that of old, was wiser than God. Yet the truth underlay the earnest insistence on the part of nearly all the Reformers, that, while there was of course a Repentance implied in the very turning of men to God, true Evangelical Repentance could only be the fruit of the apprehension of God's Grace in Christ. By some, however, the full truth has

been proclaimed—sometimes to their cost.¹ In that once famous, and still most instructive, book, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, “drawn from the chief Doctors of the Reformed Churches by Edward Fisher,” it is well set forth in the following passage:—“Forasmuch as the Holy Scripture speaketh to all in general, none of us ought to distrust himself, but believe that it doth belong particularly to himself. And to the end that this point wherein lyeth and consisteth the whole mystery of our holy faith may be understood the better: let us put the case, that some good and holy king should cause a proclamation to be made through his whole kingdom by the sound of a trumpet, that all rebels and banished men shall safely return to their houses, because that at the suit and desert of some dear friend of theirs it hath pleased the king to pardon them: certainly none of these rebels ought to doubt but that he shall obtain true pardon for his rebellion, and so return home and live under the shadow of that gracious king. Even so our good King and Lord of heaven and earth hath, for the obedience and desert of our good brother Jesus Christ, pardoned all our sins; and made proclamation throughout the whole world that every one of us may safely return to God in Jesus Christ: wherefore I beseech you make no doubt of it, but ‘draw near in full assurance of faith’ (Heb. xx. 22)” (*The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, pp. 176–178, ed. 1766).

It is not the King *waiting* till the rebels sue for peace, but *coming to them* proclaiming peace, coming in complete Forgiveness to every one whomsoever. But of course this does not do any one any good till he accepts it; and the very acceptance implies submission to the King—that

¹ Special reference may be made to Dr. M'Leod Campbell and Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. The subject has been admirably dealt with in a recent publication by the Rev. B. G. Collins, entitled *The Purpose of the Cross* (J. Clarke & Co., London).

coming to God, which is the essence of true Repentance. If it does not so bring us to God, making us actually members of His Kingdom, the Forgiveness and its proclamation are as if they had never been. Therefore Jesus sent away the woman who had been a sinner with the assurance of salvation, because the Love of God in forgiving her had awakened Love in her own soul; while the debtor *who had been forgiven*, but who would not forgive his brother, was sent into prison till he should pay the uttermost farthing; and therefore He taught that God would only forgive us if we forgave one another: a man had never really *entered into* God's Forgiveness, if this Love had not been kindled in his heart. The Forgiveness was not "provisional," but it had not done its work; it had never entered into the man's own inmost self.

Here, again, we see the importance of the thought of *the Kingdom*. It is only in relation to it that we can rightly understand the matter of Forgiveness. The Forgiveness goes forth to *all* with perfect freeness and fulness; it is *there* in Christ for each one to make his own, "without money and without price." But it is *the King's pardon*; and we never do or can make it our own, unless the Grace and Love that send it forth through the Cross move us so that we become the loyal members of the Kingdom. This is not the *condition* of receiving it—there are no conditions attached to it; but just as it would be with rebels to whom an amnesty is proclaimed, it is the *only way* in which that Pardon or Forgiveness becomes effectual to us. There is *no possibility* of enjoying the pardon outside of the Kingdom of God. Every interest of morality is thus safeguarded. If men choose to deceive themselves, they deserve to be deceived.

But, indeed, in what other way can we find "*the warrant to believe*," or *the assurance of personal Salvation, or of acceptance with God*, than in the light of such free and general

Forgiveness? These can only be ours, on the strength of a *universal* proclamation of Forgiveness—not merely of *willingness* to forgive on certain conditions being fulfilled by us. Our confidence would otherwise rest on the completeness of our fulfilment of the conditions, on something in ourselves, on our good works. Therefore the principle that we contend for underlies, implicitly, all real Gospel preaching and all believing unto Salvation. When it is departed from, there is a relapse into legalism, into rationalism (of which a well-intended legalism or zeal for righteousness is often the root), into a system of morality, rather than that religion of Love to which the Gospel comes to win us; into a round of outward duties rather than the true service of God; “into a way of serving God, which is mere Deism, having no relation to Jesus and the Spirit of God” (*Memoirs of Mr. Halyburton’s Life*, quoted in Preface to *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*).

This is, moreover, *the only way in which we can understand the Forgiveness and acceptance, or reconciliation with God, which is proclaimed in the Gospel*. The idea is not that of a separate act of pardon passed on each person who truly repents of his sin, so that when each separate sinner comes to God there is a special act of Forgiveness of the sins of that particular person. Such a conception is possible only on such an anthropomorphic view of God as cannot really be intelligently entertained. How can we be sure that such an act of Forgiveness has been passed in our case? It is rather that Holy Love that God is, going forth to the whole sinful world *in Forgiveness*, through the Cross of Christ, so that each and every sinner coming to God may be assured of His acceptance with the holy and loving Father, in spite of his consciousness of guilt and sinfulness. That Holy Love is always there: such Forgiveness is not a thing of the past or in the distance, so

to speak, nor something needing to be always repeated (as individual Forgiveness on repentance and confession must be); the Holy Love, which God is, comes actually seeking each one of us, *in Forgiveness*, to impart itself unto us, and so save us. It is free to every soul who will come to God, and ensures our acceptance with Him. But, of course, we shall always need to repent of any sin we may fall into and pray to be forgiven.

6. But now, if we think of this *universal* proclamation of Forgiveness, or Remission of Sins, it will become manifest that there must have been *some adequate ground* for it. Taken simply as *remission*, it is the letting go or sending away of the sin of the whole world. How can such a thing be done by a righteous or holy God and Father of men in a world where sin has shown itself to be such an evil? Can it be done at all? If it is difficult to believe that the remission of even the sins of individual penitent sinners is possible; if it can be said with a show of reason that it would be unrighteous simply "to let go" or "pass over" the sins of such,—bad for the world, and equally bad for the sinner himself,—how much more hardly does the difficulty press, when it is the remission of the whole world's sin *before* Repentance—the proclamation of a Divine Amnesty, or a decree of universal Forgiveness, to all who will accept it. It is surely clear that such a proclamation could not be made, save in view of something that should be an adequate manifestation of the evil and evil consequences of sin. It would not be good or safe for the sinner otherwise, or in keeping with the purpose of God's Love in His holy Kingdom. It is not the teaching of Scripture only, but a conviction deeply planted in the human breast, that sin deserves and brings suffering, yea, that it separates from God. If this Divine proclamation of Forgiveness is to be made, must not the real character and evil of sin be in some way set forth?

In even those proclamations of Grace which are made to Israel in Deutero-Isaiah and elsewhere, the connection between sin and suffering is maintained. The *nation* had suffered because of its sin, and Jehovah now deemed its suffering sufficient: "Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. xl. 2; see also chaps. xlii. 24, 25, xliii. 28, li. 17, 22, etc.). Yet she had not as a nation repented; nor are we to take such sayings in a strictly legal sense, as if so much suffering had atoned for so much sin. The Forgiveness was still wholly of Grace: "Not for your sakes, but for Mine own name's sake, have I done this." But the nation had suffered enough, and the Divine heart was moved to pity. So Jesus came to a suffering nation, a people which in its suffering was eagerly longing for Redemption. The time of God's mercy He felt assured had come, and He went forth to preach Redemption, to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God. But the Kingdom did not come, the hour of deliverance was for some reason delayed. What was the meaning of this? Was it not because the suffering was not yet adequate to show forth the terrible evil of sin? As the suffering of the Servant of Jehovah was still necessary before the complete Redemption promised to Israel could be realised, so was it in relation to the Kingdom of Grace that Jesus proclaimed. Doubtless, He applied that prophecy to Himself as the Representative of the nation and of the world. That suffering and death which He saw coming upon Him were necessary before the evil of sin could be adequately set forth and the Kingdom of God's Grace come to men. To this end He accepted what thus came to Him, for the sake of others. His cup was that in which the suffering required *in this sense* to expiate sin was full. It was that, therefore, which should bring to many Redemption, that which should lead to the great deliverance,

and bring about the fulfilment of the promised Covenant. This was His view of His death—His explanation of the suffering that came to Him—His reason for accepting it. He would drink that bitter cup to the dregs, and then the Redemption would come. *That* suffering accepted by Him as the Son of Man for men (like the Servant of Jehovah, who suffered not only for his own people Israel, but for “the nations”) would be sufficient to show men the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The Kingdom should be no longer delayed. The Holy Father should then draw nigh to men in the full declaration of Grace and Forgiveness, to bring their suffering to an end, and to bestow on them all the blessings of the Eternal Kingdom. It would, at the same time, win their hearts for God.

We shall see the need of such a manifestation still more clearly if we remember that the “Remission of Sins” is no merely negative act, but the positive acceptance of men by God as His children. If man’s sin is remitted, the barrier between him and God and His Kingdom is removed, and man is accepted by God, made His son, and the heir of His Eternal Kingdom. That Kingdom, which “the unrighteous cannot inherit,” into which the sinful cannot enter, is opened to him—nay, it comes to him, pressing itself on his acceptance.

The Gospel implies, therefore, the coming of God to men *in a new way of Grace*—not *waiting* till they repent and come to Him, but coming to them in the greatness of His Fatherly Love, that He may win them for Himself and save them with a great Salvation—to make them the members of His everlasting Kingdom of Righteousness and Love. But it is evident that this implies some special Divine thing in relation to the sin of the world, wrought in and through the Cross of Christ. It implies something through which God in His Holiness comes into this gracious relation to the sinful world, and some pledge or

guarantee for the deliverance of men from sin and for their establishment in that life of Righteousness and Love, apart from which no one can enter the perfected Kingdom of God. What God thus provides for in the Gospel is what Paul describes as "the Justification of the ungodly"—a startling enough thing, surely—bringing up against him those objections to the tendency of his Gospel of which we read in the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, but from which he does not shrink; and what we have in the Cross is that which he describes as "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," but "justifying them freely through His grace"; in Christ Jesus, constituting them His "sons and heirs."

7. We see, finally, that Remission of sins is not in itself *Salvation*, but only introductory and contributory to it. The Salvation was to come from God *because* He should forgive the sins of His people; but the Forgiveness was not the Salvation, but only the necessary condition of its being experienced—that in which God as the Saviour came to men. That Salvation was declared in the promise of the New Covenant and in kindred promises to be of an inward and spiritual kind—writing God's laws on men's hearts, so that they should no more depart from Him, and so that God should dwell within them. As expressed in Ezekiel, it is: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." To pious Israelites before Christ, the Salvation was to be from the hands of their political enemies and oppressors, in order that they might dwell in their own land in peace, and walk before God "in holiness

and righteousness, all the days of their life." But it was from their *spiritual* foes that Christ came to save them, according to the promises in the Prophets. According to the primitive Christian view, the Salvation was to come through *the second coming* of Christ—as we read, *e.g.* in Titus ii. 11: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, . . . looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." And it does come, through the coming of Christ in the Spirit into our hearts, to be the power of the new life unto God, to be Himself the very Spirit of our lives, so that, dwelling in us, He can deliver us from all our spiritual enemies, and perfectly transform us into His own likeness. We see here why Christ could identify His coming again with the coming of the Kingdom of God. It was only through His coming into the hearts of men that the Kingdom could come. It is only through the Divine indwelling that men can be *saved*. But before God through the Spirit could come thus to dwell in us, He had to reconcile the sinful world to Himself; which He did through the Cross of His Son. And this was necessary, for no arbitrary reason; for it was only thus that His Spirit *could* go forth into the hearts of men. It was through the Cross that the Spirit of our Father—the Spirit of God's Holy Love—came to men in its truth and fulness of saving power.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST'S TEACHING CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

IN all the Synoptic Gospels the theme of Christ's preaching is *the Kingdom of God*—not merely the reality of that Kingdom, but the fact that it was drawing nigh to men: "The Kingdom of God is at hand." John had made the same proclamation, but it was the Judgment aspect of the coming of God in His Kingdom that he had emphasised: "Repent, that ye may escape the wrath to come." Jesus, on the contrary, emphasised the *gracious* aspect of the Kingdom; He preached it as His Gospel: "Believe the glad tidings, and turn to the God who is coming in His Grace, that ye may be blessed." To be the bringer in of this Kingdom of God—to make men the members of it, and the partakers of its blessings—Jesus regarded as His great Divinely appointed mission. This was at once the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in the world, and the realisation by man of his God-intended destiny.

1. The Kingdom, as Jesus spoke of it, had a *double* significance. It was something present in Himself, and present, in its germ at least, in the hearts of men opened to God—something to be manifested in a growing and developing form in this world, or in the time then present; but it was also something that should come from God in all its fulness at the "consummation of the age," and which should run on into the eternal future. There is no contradiction between these two aspects of the Kingdom: the one is

simply the culmination of the other. His eschatology was quite in keeping with a spiritual conception of the Kingdom. The people to whom He came had their hopes fixed on the coming of this Kingdom of God; but they, for the most part, conceived it chiefly, if not wholly, in an outward, material, and political way.¹ With Jesus the Kingdom was in its essence wholly spiritual, and, while it should manifest itself in this world, so that God's will should be done on earth as it is in heaven, as spiritual it belonged to the realm of the Eternal. In that realm only could it be realised in its full blessedness and glory, whether we think of its scene as placed on the renovated earth after the Resurrection, or "in the Heavens." It was the Kingdom of Righteousness, of Love—of men as the sons of God—emphatically the reign of God Himself established amongst men. In preaching the Kingdom to men, Jesus presented it sometimes in its present, and sometimes in its future, aspects. To be a member of the Kingdom was the same thing as to be a son or child of the Heavenly Father, and those who were such should also be "the children of the Resurrection" and the inheritors of "the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." It was in the inheritance of the Kingdom, in its perfect and eternal form, that God's Fatherly purpose for man in the creation should be realised.

And here let us say that, in whatever way we may regard the *forms* in which Christ spoke of this Kingdom (and there is more truth in the conception of "the eschatological Christ" than is generally acknowledged), an Eternal

¹ Dalman remarks that, while "the conception of God and the world was in that age more transcendental and supernatural than at an earlier period, it must not be forgotten that the preaching of Jesus in regard to the sovereignty of God was directed to a people, among whom large sections not only fixed their aspirations on the restoration of the sovereignty, *i.e.* the political independence of Israel, but were themselves eager to take active measures in setting up this sovereignty," *e.g.* Judah of Gaulonitis (*The Words of Jesus*, pp. 132, 137).

Kingdom of God, in which there is no sin, in which all the members are united in holy mutual love, and God's will perfectly done, is the only conceivable ultimate hope of man; and the idea of such a Kingdom "prepared" for men gives us the only worthy thought of God's eternal purpose in the creation. We cannot find rest in any thought short of that of a permanent, an eternal, society, living in the life of that Holy Love which God is. Or, if we prefer that Christ's ruling thought of the Fatherhood of God should dominate our thinking and modes of expression, a perfect *family* of the eternal Father, perfected in that Love which is the very life of God, is practically the same thing. Jesus may, of course, have used the term "Kingdom" as that which answered to the people's hope; but the coming of God's Kingdom was the great Ideal of the Old Testament, and if we remember that it is, as He also called it, "*the Kingdom of our Father*," there can be no real objection to the perpetuation of the term.

2. In another way, the Kingdom had also a double significance. It was both *subjective* and *objective* in its relation to God. It was the reign of God in the hearts of men; yet it was something which came from God Himself, and *from God only*. It was His Grace and Power alone that brought, or rather sent, it to men as the greatest blessing that could come to them. Its coming was *the Gospel* that Jesus preached to the people; it was the drawing nigh of God in His Grace with the Forgiveness of their sins and unto their Salvation. The approach of the Kingdom was the dawning of "the acceptable year of the Lord," it was the coming of God to their real "Redemption," and therefore He bade men believe in it as the Gospel that God had sent them. Although with Jesus the Kingdom was not, in its essence, anything outward, but inward and spiritual, it was always something that was *to come from God Himself*,

His drawing nigh in His Grace, the fulfilment of His great promises in the Prophets, the ending of the dark days of bondage and misery, the bringing in of a new era of Redemption and Blessing.¹ Membership in this Kingdom was the same thing as *Salvation*; it was sonship to God and all that pertained thereto. As it came to men, it was to be entered by repentance and faith, by the submission of the heart to God, or to Him who, as the Lord of the Kingdom, represented God to them, with full trust in His grace.

3. The one essential *condition of entrance* into the Kingdom *in its eternal and perfected form* was *Righteousness*—such Righteousness as Christ presented and called men to. It is of great importance to observe this. Many, failing to note with sufficient clearness the distinction between the Kingdom in its present form and in its future aspects, have spoken as if Repentance and Faith were the only conditions of entrance to the Kingdom, and as if the leading of men to Repentance would be sufficient for its inheritance.² But although men became members of it now and had its life quickened within them, the Kingdom was yet to come in its truth and fulness, and *Righteousness* was the imperative condition of its inheritance. The Jewish Teachers also preached a kind of Righteousness as necessary for entrance into the Kingdom; but the Righteousness that Jesus said was required was something very much more: "Except your Righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, *ye shall in no case enter the Kingdom*

¹ As Dalman says, "it is no human agency, not even the Messiah, that by earthly means establishes this sovereignty, but God Himself"; "the Kingdom of God is regarded by Jesus principally as 'a gift of God'; it was something more than a gratifying realisation of the hopes entertained regarding it; it was a creative force, bringing new ideas in its train" (*The Words of Jesus*, pp. 138, 139).

² Hollmann thus thinks that the purpose of Christ's death is sufficiently explained by the thought of leading men to repentance.

of God." Not more in quantity, but in quality. It must be inward, spiritual, perfect in its character—the true Righteousness of a child of God. No mere keeping of the letter of the law, nor any amount of outward good deeds, would suffice; the heart, the thoughts, the motives, yea, even the desires, must be perfectly pure. The eye must be entirely "single." The heart must be freed from care for even the most necessary things of life, wholly devoted to "the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness," and the Heavenly Father trusted to provide all that is needful for the life that He has given, when the true end of life is sought. God and His service must be resolutely chosen instead of "Mammon" or the World; self must be repressed, mutilated, killed if necessary. God's universal Love must possess the heart, going forth to all, even to enemies; men, to be God's sons, must seek to be perfect (or complete), even as their Heavenly Father is perfect (or complete); only as they become like Him in Love are they His true sons and the heirs of His Kingdom. For the Kingdom's sake, father, mother, wife, all that was dearest, must be forsaken; the Cross must be taken up; when called for, everything must be sacrificed—the right hand, the right eye, even life itself—for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake: "Except a man hate his own life, he cannot be My disciple." Men must strive, agonise, die to self utterly, if they would be saved; "for he that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." That which *seems* our earthly good must be so completely renounced, and our trust so unreservedly placed in God alone, that it is "as easy for a camel to go through a needle's eye, as for a rich man to enter the Kingdom." The requirement was so high that the disciples asked Him, in view of this saying, "Who then can be saved?" The answer, "How hard it is for them that *trust* in riches," does not really soften it. But, according to some authorities, this is a gloss because of the hard-

ness of the saying: our Saviour simply repeated in more general terms, "*How hard it is to enter* into the Kingdom of God." To His disciples' wonderment, His only answer was, "With man it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." It is easy to speak in a light-hearted way about "following Christ" and "being righteous" in order to be saved; but if we read over the requirements of Christ in these Gospels, and set fairly before ourselves that Righteousness without which men should come short of the Kingdom, while yet we feel that the standard cannot be lowered, we shall be compelled to echo the disciples' question, and we must simply accept the answer given to them, and await the Divine development as the Christ proceeds on His way to the fulfilment of His mission.

To preach the Heavenly Father's Love that men might be led to "seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness" was the aim of all our Lord's teaching and action. In all His Beatitudes and in all His promises of "Reward," it was the Kingdom and its blessedness that He set before them; and the Righteousness to which He called them (while it was truly the Kingdom of God within them) was to prepare and fit them for the coming Kingdom in its eternal glory and blessedness. Even those parables which speak of the Kingdom as slowly growing and developing, have still this end in view: the Kingdom is always, in one aspect, something which is coming from God, and for which men must be prepared. His solemn warnings had the same purpose—to prepare men for the coming Kingdom, which, even with Him, had an element of judgment associated with it. But how many received His teaching, how many responded to His call, so as to become fitted for the inheritance of the Kingdom? Of those to whom He preached, how many were likely to gain the required Righteousness? True, it was an Ideal that He set before them; it was a matter of

the *heart* or *spirit* of a man; but, even so, how many had the single eye, the pure heart and child-spirit, without which, He said, none could enter the Kingdom? He had indeed His "little flock"—His twelve disciples and a few others—to whom He gave every encouragement, and whom He assured that it was His "Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom"—assuming that their hearts were right with God and truly set on this true Righteousness; yea, "many" should come from all quarters into the Kingdom whom men did not reckon as belonging to it at all. But the mass of the people, like their Ecclesiastical rulers, were unspiritual and unheeding; and if only such Righteousness as Jesus set forth could admit to the Kingdom, the salvation of the world at large must have seemed hopeless.

Yet it was certain, and is so for ever, that such Righteousness must be the essential requirement for admittance into God's Eternal Kingdom. Into it no sin can enter. The very existence of a perfected Kingdom of God depends on the exclusion from it of all that is evil, self-seeking, or unloving. Admit sin, and not only does all security for blessedness disappear, but the Kingdom itself, as the Kingdom of *God*, has no longer any existence. It is not only that the Righteousness of God decrees this, but that His Love for His children requires it. The Kingdom of God as the final goal of man is a *society*, and in that society perfect Love must rule—not only Love for God, but for one another—Love itself—the Love that God is—such practical Love as Christ pictured in His teaching and set forth in His Person. Apart from the reign of such Love, there can be no eternal blessedness for God's children, and no real Kingdom of God their Father.

4. Christ represented *exclusion from this Kingdom* as a sad reality, and as being the doom of those who lacked the Righteousness requisite for entering it. The coming of the

Kingdom was also the day of Judgment—of the separation of the unrighteous from the righteous. To His mind, exclusion from the Kingdom was just as real as admission to it, and He pictured that exclusion in the most moving manner. To be unprepared or unfit for that Kingdom was to be “lost,” even in this present time; to find one’s self shut out from it in the future, was to be in “the outer darkness,” where there would be vain “wailing and gnashing of teeth.” It was equivalent to the being “cast into Gehenna, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” It meant the loss of “the life” or of “the soul” itself: “Fear not them that can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna,” or, “which, after He hath killed, hath power (or authority) to cast into Gehenna.” Better to enter the Kingdom with one eye or one hand only, than to be cast into Gehenna. This doom was not something to be experienced by notorious sinners only; it was the inevitable fate of all who were destitute of the required Righteousness. The alternative was, either inside the Kingdom or outside of it, and “narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that are finding it”; but “wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that are entering in thereby.” Exclusion from the Kingdom should be the fate of many who were confident that they should enter it: “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Thy name?” etc., “and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.” It was the fate of even the poor “foolish virgins,” and of all who waited till “the door was shut.” *Now* the invitation went forth freely to all, but, while “many were called, few were chosen.” The wheat and the tares were to be suffered to grow together, but at the harvest the separation should be made, and the

tares "gathered into bundles, to be burned." The Gospel net drew in fish of all sorts, but, in "the end of the age, the wicked shall be severed from the righteous, and cast into a furnace of fire," to their great surprise and disappointment. Even if an unfit person should by some means gain entrance into the Kingdom—a man "not having on a wedding garment"—the King would infallibly discover him, and he should be cast out "into the outer darkness." Therefore it was that Jesus so earnestly exhorted men to Repentance and to the seeking of the Righteousness of the Kingdom of God, urging them to be ready to sacrifice everything, even life itself, rather than risk the loss of the eternal life of the Kingdom: "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" or, as St. Luke has it, "lose or forfeit his own self."

All this is very solemn, and it is an aspect of our Lord's teaching on which we are apt to lay too little stress. We say "Lord, Lord," to Him, but here we too often do not even *believe* what He says. No doubt, His language is couched in the forms of thought familiar to the men of His time and place; but the underlying meaning is plain: *the unrighteous cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*. And if we reflect, we must be convinced that, in whatever terms it may be represented (and whatever grounds we may believe there are for entertaining a "larger hope"), this exclusion from the Kingdom of God of all the unrighteous is a stern and awful necessity, if there is to be any *Eternal Kingdom of God*, without sin, and any ultimate and permanent hope for man at all. This *must* be the fate of the *unfit*, in the first instance at any rate, and for ever, unless there be some means unrevealed whereby they are to be hereafter fitted for the Kingdom. We are far from asserting that our Lord's teaching forbids our entertaining the hope that there may be such means of Salvation in reserve with God, although, at the same time, we cannot conceal from our-

selves the fact that our Lord has spoken of the possibility of *losing* "the soul" or "the life." We are wisely left without knowledge on this subject. But whatever we may *hope* and would fain believe, the *certainty* is, that the Kingdom of God in its final and perfected state cannot at any time be entered by the unfit or the unrighteous, and that there can be no eternal Good, save in a Kingdom or family of God from which all that is not of Love is excluded. Our Lord's teaching here may seem stern, but the truth is often a stern thing, while none the less the expression of Love; and we have no right to ignore this portion of His teaching and take only what seem to us the more gracious elements. And if we remember what the Eternal Kingdom of God must be, we shall see that the separation that our Lord so often speaks of, and the decisive exclusion of those who are destitute of the true Righteousness, are absolute necessities, not of wrath, but of the Love that God is. No doubt, it is an awful thought that there should be *at any time* any shut out from that Eternal Kingdom of the only Good, and we naturally seek refuge in the thought that, surely, God's Kingdom, just because it is *His*, must yet be all-embracing. But there is nothing clearer in our Lord's teaching and in Reason itself than this: that only those who possess the Righteousness of Love, that makes them *fit* members of that Kingdom, can at any time enter it. It is our hesitation here that makes the need of Salvation seem unreal, and the Gospel we proclaim too often powerless. If Christ so earnestly seeks to save us, there must be something very real to be saved from; and if men do not believe this, they will not seek Salvation, nor accept it when it is offered to them. Of course it is from *sin* that Jesus seeks to save us; but it is from sin, as making us untrue to God as our Father, to men as our brethren, to ourselves as God's children, and so, *unfit for His Kingdom*.¹

¹ Our statements in this chapter concerning Christ's preaching of

Now, to our Lord all this was awfully real. It was an unbearable thought to Him, that men—even a single soul—should be *lost*—that there should be even one lost sheep, one single wandering child who did not come home to the Father's house. With all earnestness He sought to *save* them—to save them from the present misery of sin, with its separation from God, and from the deeper misery of that exclusion from the face of God and from the Father's Kingdom into which that separation must otherwise deepen. Here was a motive that carried everything before it. So, to save them, He not only preached and pleaded with men, but gave Himself as a sacrifice for them on the Cross. If we think seriously of what we have seen to be His teaching concerning that Kingdom of God in which is man's only hope, we can understand something of what He must have felt and we can see why He was ready to give Himself as a sacrifice for men's Salvation. If the requirement of Righteousness for entrance into the Kingdom was necessarily pitched so high (and it cannot be lowered without destroying the very idea of a perfected Kingdom of God), what hope was there for the majority of mankind? How many of those to whom Jesus preached could attain to such Righteousness—such utter denial of self, and life of unselfish Love and Purity? How many men to-day, even in the light of this present time, and with all the sanctifying influences that have been brought to bear on us, can seriously believe that they have attained to such Righteousness? And yet, without such qualitative Righteousness, it is clear that the Eternal Kingdom of God cannot be entered by any one. How certain it is, then, that something must be done for men, more than teaching and

the Kingdom of God find full support and illustration in Dalman's section on "The Sovereignty of God" in his *The Words of Jesus*, considered in the light of post-Biblical Jewish writings and the Aramaic language (E.T., 1902).

exhorting, if they are to be saved. If God is to open the Kingdom of Heaven to men, it must be on grounds other than anything as yet in themselves. Left to themselves, their case seems utterly hopeless. God Himself must come to them, to their help and salvation. No mere enforcement of Law, with its spiritual requirements made manifest; no stern call to repentance; no awful picture of the doom of the lost; no preaching of the blessedness of the Kingdom; no representation of the Love of the waiting Father, can effect it: God Himself must come to them in His Grace, and, in spite of their sin and unworthiness, be their Saviour. The Kingdom can only come, as the Prophets had declared, as a new era of Grace—a “new Covenant,” founded on a Divine decree of universal Forgiveness—God’s great Love for men thus defeating sin, and winning their hearts for Himself. God must be able—not, certainly, to depart from the requirement of Righteousness in all its fulness (for that can never be departed from), but in some way *to communicate His gracious Spirit to sinful men*, and so become *in* them the power of their Salvation. He must be able to come to them in a new way of Grace. He must find some way in which, in harmony with His Holiness, He can take sinful men into acceptance with Himself, and make them His sons and heirs; otherwise, they can have no hope of Salvation. True, there is always Forgiveness for the returning sinners, but *the sinners will not return till God brings them to Himself*. Moreover, Repentance and Forgiveness do not ensure that Righteousness without which no one can enter the Kingdom. The inmost heart must be won for God and the Kingdom—“a new heart” must be put within them, a new spirit must be given them; the very Spirit of God Himself must become the spirit of their lives. There must therefore be such a manifestation of the Love of God as shall prove stronger than the evil power

that holds them, and God must so communicate Himself to them that the Spirit in them shall ultimately triumph completely over "the flesh," and the Righteousness of the Kingdom be made theirs in blessed, eternal possession. The necessity before us is not an unreal creation of Theology, but most real, practical, and pressing—so much so that the Saviour gave Himself as a sacrifice to meet it. It was an absolute necessity, if the Kingdom of God was to be established and man's destiny as God's child realised. Unless men are to be hopelessly lost, some more powerful motive must be set in operation in their hearts than anything that is as yet working. Whatever it may be that hinders the coming of the Kingdom in its power, it must be taken away. The sin that keeps it back must be removed. In short, *God must come to men in a new revelation of His Grace, if they are to be saved.* That Jesus interpreted, ultimately at least, the necessity for His death in this light, cannot, we think, be doubted. It was that which should bring the Kingdom in. It was the great sacrifice by means of which men should be redeemed from the sin that shut them out of the Kingdom. It was that which should seal and establish that new Covenant of assured Salvation which was founded on Forgiveness, and according to which God should come to men whose sins He had forgiven, to dwell in them and save them, putting His laws in their inward parts and writing them in their hearts. "The things impossible with men" should be thus made actual by God. And therefore the confidence with which Jesus looked forward to His death as that which should lead to the triumph of His cause.

We must ask now, more particularly in the light of all that we have seen in these Gospels, and in the light that shines upon ourselves at the present time: What was it that made this sacrifice necessary, and wherein did its efficacy consist?

PART IV



THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CROSS

CHAPTER I

THE NECESSITY, NATURE, AND EFFICACY OF THE CROSS

1. *The Earliest Interpretation : Unwarranted and Inadequate Theories*

WE have already had some glimpses of the necessity for the Cross. But we have also seen that Jesus did not give any such definite teaching concerning its nature and necessity as has been often formulated in doctrines of "the Atonement." It was necessary, He taught, for the redemption of men, for the coming of the Kingdom of God in the fulness of its power and the establishment of the new spiritual Covenant of Salvation. Because it was necessary in the Wisdom and Love of God, His Father, He was willing to accept it. But, although the Cross had a relation to the going forth of the Divine Forgiveness to the world (not that it wrought anything on God), its saving power (as with that of the suffering of the Servant of God in Isaiah) was to lie in what it wrought in the consciences and hearts of men, in the interpretation that should be given to it. Its effect should depend on what it wrought in men as the suffering endured by the Christ of God for their salvation. We ask now, therefore, How are *we* to interpret the Cross to-day in the light of the records contained in these Gospels? Its whole power lies in our interpretation of it. Till the Cross of Christ becomes thus an influence in our own souls, it is for us the same as if it had never been endured by Christ. A doctrine of the Cross is only

of practical value in as far as it brings home to men the saving power of the Cross.

The full meaning of the Cross could only be learned through the influence of the Spirit that came to men through Christ, touching their hearts, awakening their consciences, evoking an answer from their own moral consciousness. This is distinctly stated by both St. John and St. Paul. It was only through the Spirit that the things concerning Christ were revealed or made known. Only, indeed, through some such revelation and interpretation could the hideous crime consummated on Calvary become the supreme manifestation of the Love of God for men.

L We know what the Christian interpretation of the Cross was. As we find it represented in the earlier chapters of Acts, it was the work of lawless men, a glaring crime, yet a fulfilment of the counsels of God and of the word of the Prophets, suffering that was necessary before the Christ could enter into His glory as the Lord and Saviour of men. His enemies had by wicked hands crucified and slain Him; but God had raised Him up, God had vindicated and exalted Him, and now even to His murderers repentance and forgiveness were preached in His name. It was a vicarious sacrifice on men's behalf like that of the Servant of God in the 53rd of Isaiah (Acts viii. 32, 35). But it is in the writings of Paul and the other Apostles that the interpretation of the Cross to which they were led appears in its fulness. As men beheld that wondrous Cross on which the Christ, the Righteous One, the Son of God, suffered and died, there was only one sufficient explanation that could be given of it: "He died for *my* sake; He suffered for my sin—what I deserve to suffer; He was made sin for me, that I might be made the Righteousness of God in Him. God on that Cross gave up His Son to die as a sacrifice for our sins, in order that His forgiving and saving Love might reach us in all its

fulness." The conscience was awakened to see in the suffering of Christ that which *sin* deserved to suffer: "He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf." On the sinless Christ this suffering was laid by the will of God, in order to our salvation. It was not deserved by Him, but was borne by Him for our sakes. It was the suffering that sin deserved. Christ died there, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and we see *ourselves*, according to the flesh, dying on that Cross. It was a manifestation of "the Righteousness of God," in view of the sin which He had passed over, and of the Forgiveness which was to be proclaimed to all men—such a manifestation that faith in it brought peace to the burdened conscience, and the Spirit of God witnessed with the believing spirit that condemnation had been lifted, and that the erstwhile sinner was now an accepted child and heir of God. It was through the Spirit that the meaning of the Cross was brought home to men, that the assurance of Divine Forgiveness was given, and the Love of God in Christ so "shed abroad in the heart" that they could "rejoice in God, who had thus reconciled them to Himself." And from that Cross the inspiration and power of a new life came to men, even that of Christ Himself living in them. In Christ was seen man after the flesh dying, and man in Him rising into a new life in the Spirit. It was for men, therefore, in spirit to die with Christ, and to live with Him the new justified life of Righteousness before God, which has "eternal life" attached to it—making their own, in actual fact, the Righteousness which God graciously "reckons" to them in Christ, their Representative. All this interpretation was due to the work of "the Spirit of Truth" in men's hearts, and we understand it to have been so wrought in them because, by Christ on His Cross, a real Divine necessity in relation to sin had been met, so that Forgiveness could go forth to sinful men according to that Divine and Eternal Truth, to answer to which the

human soul is created. The Holy Spirit of Truth can only come to men as some Divine Truth is witnessed to them, and as an answering capacity for responding to the Truth is awakened within their souls. It is in this way alone that the Cross can be truly interpreted. The Cross is a great Divine word or utterance to men, the meaning of which the Spirit of Truth alone can teach. But that Holy Spirit has never ceased to teach hearts open to Divine influences, or to lead truly willing souls into the truth. And although the *essence* of the Cross was grasped by the first Christians under the Spirit's teaching, this was received and held by them in such *forms*—modes of thought and speech—as they were able to apprehend it under. While, therefore, we, if we are guided into the truth, shall of necessity find ourselves in essential agreement with them, we must seek to apprehend the significance of the Cross under such forms of thought as are provided for ourselves after nineteen centuries of the Spirit's teaching. Above all, we must begin with Christ Himself, and be true to the facts concerning Him contained in the Gospels.

✓ Each age has to interpret the Cross for itself. This is what we see attempted in the history of theories of
✓ "the Atonement." The Cross was largely interpreted according to the prevailing ideas of each period. In the earliest period the influence of the Jewish sacrificial system is manifest. In a military and feudal age, when evil was strong and virulent, it was not unnatural to form even those theories of a ransom to Satan, so long repeated in varying form and so incredible to us to-day. When Kingship or Sovereignty bulked largely, Anselm's theory of satisfaction to the outraged honour of God succeeded. Under legal influences the Governmental theory of Grotius appeared. In the Reformation, when the great question concerned the direct access of sinful men to God, the Cross was naturally interpreted as a satisfaction to the *Justice*

of God, and Christ was regarded as meeting the penal conditions under which men through sin were placed. In our own time, when the Fatherhood of God and the supremacy of ethics dominate theological thought, endeavours have been made to interpret the Cross from those points of view. Later still, since Criticism has led us back to seek primarily a purely historical conception of Jesus and His work, we discern that the Cross must find its interpretation in this light. There is also the governing thought of "Evolution" which will be referred to later on. But in at least the main current of Christian thought on the subject, underlying all theories, and side by side with those old ideas of a ransom to Satan, there has always been the feeling that the Cross had some real and necessary relation to man's sin and the Divine Forgiveness. All along we witness elements of what are termed the judicial, the moral, and the mystical theories, and we do not follow in the continuity of Christian thought if any of these be wholly omitted. The forms in which some of them have been stated are, however, inadequate for our time, and many things in these statements are unwarranted from a New Testament point of view, tending only to confuse the mind and obscure the truth.

We do not by any means hope to be able to state a complete and final doctrine of the Cross, but we may try to see its rationale as it appears in the Gospel pages, apart from all the theories that have been built up in later times. But before attempting to give a more complete statement of the necessity, nature, and efficacy of the Cross than we have as yet been able to do in these pages, let us put aside some theories which seem unwarranted or inadequate, having regard to such as are still advanced, and especially to comparatively recent statements.

1. While Jesus regarded His suffering and death as

coming upon Him because of man's sin, we must be entirely loyal to His conviction that it was *in the furtherance of His Father's gracious purpose* towards sinful men that this necessity was laid upon Him. It was by no means something arising from His own motion and offered by Him to God in order that God might be gracious and forgiving, but something that was laid upon Him *because* God was gracious and forgiving, yet necessary before God's forgiving Love could go forth in all the fulness of its saving power. The suffering of the Cross for our sakes proceeded, not merely from the love of Christ for men, but (as the New Testament constantly teaches) from the love of God who gave up His Son to be such a sacrifice. ✓ This at once shows the necessity for the sacrifice, and renders impossible certain explanations that have been given of it. While the Cross had a real relation to the sin of the world and was accepted by Christ as being in some sense a sacrifice necessary in view of man's sin and for his salvation, it could not have been necessary to *propitiate* an angry God, to satisfy an outraged Divine honour or justice, to meet the requirements of a Divine righteousness that demanded the sinner's death, to atone for sin in the sense of offering a satisfying equivalent, or making reparation, or to expiate it by doing something \ that should have that effect before God. It was in no sense like heathen sacrifices to make the Deity propitious. Such sacrifices originate in ignorance of God, and have been fruitful of incalculable evil. Sacrifice was the *form* in which He viewed it, consistently with the mode in which conceptions were formed in His human mind. He drew His ideas of what was required from the Old Testament, and the Cross presented itself to Him as being (as it truly was) *a vicarious sacrifice*, after the manner of that attributed to the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah. But we must be very careful as to how we interpret that sacrifice.

While Jesus accepted it as it had indeed been "written" concerning the Servant of God, who would only thus see "the pleasure of the Lord prosper in His hand," we must remember that Jesus was not a Theologian reasoning out the grounds of the necessity for His sacrifice. The reasons by which men have upheld its necessity were perhaps far from His thoughts. *Why* this sacrifice was necessary in the counsels of God before the Kingdom could come, was perhaps not perfectly clear to His human understanding, and possibly it was this that, in some measure, caused His agony, and called forth His prayers in relation to the Cross, and that made it seem so awful to Him, as something required by the loving Father. If all had been perfectly clear, we can scarcely understand His prayer in Gethsemane or His cry on the Cross. Christ's thought of God did not suffer change even though this Cross was laid upon Him. What *was* clear to Him was, that it was *necessary* according to the perfect will of God, and that the result should be the coming of the Kingdom and the Salvation of men. The God of Christ was still the all-gracious Father, who yearned over sinners, and longed for their return to Himself that He might bless them. He did not hold Himself in an attitude of anger, or cherish wrath or resentment towards them. He still made His sun to shine and His rain to fall on the just and the unjust, and was *kind* to the unthankful and the evil. Over the prodigal, in his sinful wandering, the Divine heart still yearned in the fulness of Fatherly love and compassion, and the Divine arms were open to embrace him, if he would only come home. There were stern, even awful, consequences of sin, which could not be set aside, which must take effect; but it was just for this reason that the Divine heart of Love so earnestly yearned over sinners, and sought to save them. No abstract Divine Justice or Righteousness, nor anything in the nature of God, demanded the sinner's death; if he died, it was his

own sad doing, in spite of God and to the great grief of his Father.

The death of Christ cannot, therefore, have been necessary to "propitiate" God, or to "expiate" or "atone for sin," in the sense that has often been imported into these phrases.

The expression "to atone for sin" is never used of Christ's work in the New Testament. Instead of "Atonement" in Rom. v. 11 (the only place in which the word occurs in the A.V.), we have in the R.V. "reconciliation" —at-one-ment—which all acknowledge to be the proper meaning of *Katallagē*, as it was also the original sense of the English word "Atonement" (At-one-ment). Instead of an Atonement offered *to* God, it was God who, Paul says, "was in Christ atoning the world to Himself." The Atonement was something made *by* God, not *to* God. We cannot think of God as making an Atonement to Himself in the sense of "atoning for sin."¹ And although the Cross is spoken of as "a propitiation," it was not a propitiation *of* God, but one provided *by* God, as all the propitiations and "atonements" of the Old Testament had been provided *by* God for men.

This mistaken idea of the Cross as an Atonement *for* sin made to God has misled many. Even a writer like Wendt speaks of the Cross as an act which *pleased* God by the perfect obedience which it manifested, so that it became associated with the Divine Forgiveness of sin. No doubt the perfect obedience of Christ was pleasing to God and was an essential element in the At-one-ment of the Cross, but not as procuring Forgiveness. In Dr. M'Leod Campbell's moral and spiritual doctrine also (which has done so much to lead to a better conception of the Cross), although he recognises that "if God provides the

¹ This subject of At-one-ment is more fully set forth in the author's *The Gospel of Reconciliation or At-one-ment*. T. & T. Clark, 1910.

Atonement, forgiveness must precede Atonement" (*The Nature of the Atonement*, 6th ed., pp. 16, 17, etc.), and distinguishes between "bearing punishment" and "making Atonement," the Atonement is still made by Christ for man's sin; Christ's confession of our sins is an *expiatory* confession (p. 126). The same remark applies to such modified statements as we have in Principal Caird and others. Although the idea of penal suffering is rejected, the conception of the Cross as an Atonement made to God for sin, a "satisfaction," "expiatory suffering for sin," though of a moral and spiritual kind, suffering that "expunges or cancels sin," is retained (see Principal Caird's *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, Lecture XVII.). There is this element of value, however, in these conceptions. When we think of our self-identification with Christ in His suffering because of sin, when we homologate it, as it were, and make it spiritually our own, it meets a need which the sinful soul feels in view of its sinfulness: "Christ has done something for me which I feel needed to be done, but which I could not do for myself." He has given adequate expression to the evil of sin before God. But this does not imply that Christ was atoning *for*, or expiating sin by what He suffered and did, in order that God might forgive our sin. The movement that culminated in the Cross proceeded wholly from God Himself, and was accepted by our Lord as having that origin. It was the result and the expression of Forgiveness in the Divine fatherly heart, not in any sense its cause—the ground (or perhaps we should rather say the *means*) of the *proclamation* of the Divine Forgiveness, not the ground of that Forgiveness itself. What more convincing proof of the Divine Forgiveness could have been given than just this giving up by God of His own Son to die for sinful men?

2. While there is, as we shall see, a sense in which those

consequences which are also the punishment of sin, as sin is punished in the working out of the Divine moral order, lighted on and were borne by Christ, we cannot rightly describe His suffering and death as *penal*. There is a truth underlying the judicial and penal theory which sees Christ enduring for our sakes such consequences and punishment of sin as manifests the Divine righteousness or the judgment of God on sin; there is a sense in which these may fall on one who is wholly righteous and be borne by him for the sake of others, but as this in Christ's case has been commonly stated it cannot be accepted. Historically viewed, as these Gospels present the facts, it was *man* who caused Christ's suffering and death—man, acting *against* God, not as the executor of the Divine Justice; it was man who was venting his wrath on Him who condemned his sin, not God who was punishing His Son in man's stead. It was *Sin* that crucified Christ.

There are also elements in sin's punishment which could not possibly have been experienced by one who was sinless. We cannot think of Jesus as either suffering, by means of this act of wicked men, punishment at the hand of the righteous Father, or as in any sense experiencing in Himself the suffering that sin brings into the soul of the sinner. As we shall see, He did suffer the consequences of sin in so far as these can come on a sinless person, and in His death the judgment of God on sin was manifested. But the punishment of sin in its true inwardness could not possibly be experienced by "One who did no sin," nor could the guilt of humanity be laid upon Him in any outward way, so that by His suffering He should expiate it.

The thought that Christ endured in our stead the penalty due to sin was the chief error in Dr. Dale's presentation of the Cross, founded largely on a misinterpretation of our Lord's experience thereon. Mr. Scott Lidgett, in his very thoughtful and suggestive book, *The Spiritual Principle*

of the Atonement, although he criticises Dr. Dale, still retains the penal conception in a way which cannot be accepted. The sacrifice of the Cross was, in his view, Christ's "complete surrender and obedience to His Father in manifesting His own life as the Son throughout His earthly life, but especially in death—under the penal conditions prescribed to Him by His incarnation, and consequent union with the race of sinful men" (1st ed., pp. 119, 120). But while, as Mr. Lidgett truly says, the Cross is "the outward manifestation and assertion of all that the Spirit of God inwardly reveals as to sin" (p. 302),—Christ, who in Himself was wholly free from sin, could not have been brought, or allowed to stand, under such penal conditions before God. His suffering was not, as it has been described, because "the sin of the human race gathered in one huge penalty and cloud of guilt upon the head of Jesus Christ" (Dr. Watson, *The Doctrines of Grace*, p. 111). We have here the old, purely external conception of God, inconsistent with what Mr. Lidgett says so well concerning His immanence. If God was, in some real sense, *in* Christ, and not merely external to Him, we should thus have God Himself in Christ coming under penal conditions (which is really Dr. Dale's doctrine); but this is inconceivable, however truly God in Christ may have, in some real sense, "taken our sins upon Himself." No doubt, God, at all cost even to Himself, maintains that Holiness which is essential to His nature and in which the well-being of His children is founded, while at the same time He seeks to save sinful men. But He does not depart from what is absolutely true and just and right. He cannot make either Himself or His perfectly holy Son what they are not, viz. subject to penal conditions. But this entire view of "penal conditions" rests on a false conception of God's relation to men. It is a remnant of the old thought of God as a Sovereign and Judge, chiefly. To view the Cross thus, is to fail to rise to Christ's teaching concerning God

as the loving, though holy, *Father* of men. A Father does not erect and impose penal conditions on His children. They may be sinful, and they are punished. But God does not, as if in some outward way, arraign them at a Judgment Bar and inflict punishment on them. Their punishment is self-inflicted. The Divine Righteousness is self-acting, and its object is never penal merely, but to teach and to discipline as well. If it falls short of its purpose, this is man's loss and God's loss: man cannot enter the Kingdom for which God has sought to prepare him, and for which Christ died to win him. Since, therefore, God's punishments are self-acting, and always self-induced, it is clear that Christ could not have, by any means, stood under penal conditions. He could not have done so, for the simple reason that He had never done any evil to bring punishment into His soul. It is true that the Humanity that He represented had done evil, and that this would be felt by Christ as its Head; but it would not be felt by Him as punishment, but as sorrow and shame. He might feel that for its sin it deserved to be separated from God, and He may have been *willing* to endure in Himself all that sin deserved. But still, this was not as enduring punishment. The simple fact that all His suffering was originated *by wicked men*, should alone prevent such an interpretation of the Cross. All such theories labour under the difficulty that, historically, the crucifixion of Christ was a criminal act against God, although permitted by Him and made to serve His gracious purpose towards men.

To say that Jesus died as simply enduring the penalty of *death* in our stead is both unwarranted and inadequate. It raises the question whether physical death is really the penalty of sin, a question to which science and reasonable thought concerning the necessary conditions of life suggest a negative reply.¹ It makes an answer to this question a preliminary to faith in the Cross. It fails also to meet

¹ See Part V.

the full Biblical representations of the value and power of Christ's sufferings. And according to the teaching of Christ the consequence of sin was not dying merely, but exclusion from the Kingdom, the loss of the soul, the outer darkness, the being cast into Gehenna. Neither physically nor spiritually was such an experience possible to Christ.

These interpretations of the Cross, further, rest on an error which it seems difficult for men to get over. We still continue to speak as if man had been created holy and perfectly good, and had *departed* from God, and must be punished in consequence; whereas the truth is, that man, created by God for sonship towards Himself, has not yet come up to the Divine ideal. He was not created holy, but is only in the course of being so created. It is because of his failure to reach the Divine ideal that he suffers. His sin is real and not to be excused or explained away. But it is himself who suffers, whether he is immediately conscious of it or not. The constitution of his nature and of the universe is such that suffering and loss inevitably follow sin. Far from *inflicting* punishment on him, the Eternal Father regards His sinning and suffering creature as the object of His infinite pity and compassion, and therefore moves to save him. Men are not living in their Divine Father's world "under penal conditions," as the old Theology taught. By no means can such a conception be drawn from the teaching or action of Christ. Our ideas are still derived too largely from the King's Court and the Forum, instead of from the teaching and Spirit of Jesus. God is not the stern Sovereign and inexorable Judge that men have pictured Him—He is not such by any necessity of His Divine nature or Divine government; He is, as Jesus taught, the loving Father, yearning over us in infinite compassion—kind to the unthankful and the evil, full of mercy and forgiveness. That was the God whom Jesus held up to us, and bade us resemble in cherishing a like forgiving Love towards all men.

Although sin is invariably punished, we have no grounds in Christ's teaching for the ascription of *wrath* to God in the way in which it has been ascribed to Him by many theologians—wrath that must be met before He can forgive. God with Jesus was the Holy, but the all-gracious, Father, utterly opposed to sin, but loving and seeking at any cost to save the sinner. "Wrath" is a purely human conception. We are not warranted to transfer to God such feelings as belong to finite beings with imperfect knowledge and love. God sees what man cannot see. He pities the sinner, and desires only his Salvation. Although man was created—that is, *conceived*—in the image of God, he has not yet nearly attained to real likeness to the Father. It is just here that God so greatly transcends us. The righteous and the wicked are not the same in His sight, but God is a Holy Love, going forth towards all, and men get the benefit of that Love just as they come into harmony with it. That Love, while entirely opposed to sin, does not turn into wrath towards the poor self-deceived sinner. The "wrath" that punishes sin operates in the constitution of man and the world. It is not like a human feeling that needs appeasing. In fact, it cannot be appeased, for it is part of the moral (and physical) order of the world and must work on wherever sin is found. While Christ, who was "the image of God," was indignant with the hypocrites of His day, in the bottom of His heart He pitied them, and was ready to die for their Salvation. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," most truly expresses the mind of Christ and the mind of God.

3. It is only an extension of the foregoing, to say that the Cross was not required in order to *reconcile God's Righteousness with His Love and Grace*. As Ritschl remarks, "it is unbiblical to assume that between God's Grace or Love and His Righteousness there is an opposition which,

in its bearing upon the sinful race of men, would lead to a contradiction, only to be solved through the interference of Christ. The Righteousness of inexorable retribution, which would be expressed in the sentence, *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*, is not in itself a religious conception, nor is it the meaning of the Righteousness which in the sources of the Old and New Testaments is ascribed to God. God's Righteousness is His self-consistent and undeviating action in behalf of the Salvation of the members of His community. In essence, it is identical with His Grace."¹ There can be no opposition in God between His Righteousness and His Love. The idea that the suffering of Christ was a satisfaction to the *Justice* of God as opposed to His *Mercy* rests on the fallacious conception of a division in the Divine nature, or on that of a distinction of the Divine attributes from the Divine Personality. God cannot be divided within Himself. His Righteousness is grounded in His Love, and His Love is always righteous.² Christ's suffering, therefore, was not the bearing of a *punishment*, which in mere justice required otherwise to be inflicted on us. If Jesus stooped in any sense to bear the sins of men, it was not under the thought of the Justice of God, but of His Holy Love and of the evil of sin in relation to the great purpose of that Holy Love. He certainly compared His death to the two primary sacrifices of the Old Testament—sacrifices which had, in the Biblical sense, an "atoning" or "sin-covering" element, and we must accordingly interpret His death as having some similar efficacy in relation to sin. But, again

¹ *Justification and Reconciliation* (E.T.), p. 473. The above statement, however, needs qualification. God's Righteousness is an absolute quality of the Divine character, independent of the relation to Israel. It includes His opposition to sin and the just punishment of the wicked (see Skinner's *Isaiah*, ii. 238).

² It has been pointed out (recently by Professor Burkitt) that this idea of a division in God goes back much farther than to Anselm—really to Marcion's idea of the Just God and the Good God.

to adopt Ritschl's words, "it is unbiblical to assume that any one of the Old Testament sacrifices, after the analogy of which Christ's death is judged, is meant to move God from wrath to Grace. On the contrary, these sacrifices rely implicitly upon the reality of God's Grace toward the Covenant people, and merely define certain positive conditions which the members of the Covenant people must fulfil, in order to enjoy the nearness of the God of Grace" (*ibid.* p. 474; see also Dr. Davidson's *The Theology of the Old Testament*). One of these conditions, however, was—and here we differ materially from Ritschl—an acknowledgment of sin, expressed by the sprinkling of the blood on the altar; a confession on the part of the offerer that sin separated from God—perhaps that sin deserved death. But it was this *confession* or *acknowledgment*, not the death of the victim, that was pleasing to God. That the sinner must "die" is a dictate, not of the Justice of God as standing over against His Love, demanding *satisfaction* or *punishment*,—this is an altogether unworthy conception of God as compared with the truly Biblical one,—it is a *necessity* arising from the Holy Love of God, in view of His gracious purpose for men as His children, which rests on His nature as a Holy Love, which requires the exclusion of all sin from His Eternal Kingdom. This result, moreover, is infallibly secured by the constitution which He has given to man and the world.

Our Lord also, indeed, applied to Himself the representation of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, who should "bear the sins" of the people,—and to "bear sins" means, no doubt, to bear the punishment due to sins,—but it could not be *as* punishment that Christ endured His sufferings and submitted to death; nor was it to meet the requirements of a retributive Justice in God. The ends of *such* Justice, did it exist, could not have been met by suffering falling on the head of One who was wholly innocent, even

though He at the same time represented a sinful Humanity. If He submitted to death as the Representative of men, we must seek the explanation of this act in some other way. Certainly the Gospels give us no warrant for saying that the suffering and death which our Lord submitted to at the hands of wicked men was the enduring of retributive punishment at the hands of His Father, or a satisfaction to Divine Justice in any such sense.

4. Therefore the Cross was not necessary, as it has been often represented, in order to *enable* God to forgive *repentant sinners*. The Divine Forgiveness had always been free and sure to returning sinners. Once more we would repeat that is not merely *individual* Forgiveness on Repentance that is in question, but the movement of God in His forgiving Love to *the sinful world*, and the proclamation of free Forgiveness to all who will come to Him and accept it. Moreover, it is God drawing nigh to save men from sin, and to make them His children and the heirs of His Kingdom. Forgiveness alone would not save any one; or make any one fit for the Kingdom of God. It is not guilt merely, but *sinfulness*, that excludes men from the Kingdom; not a cleansing from guilt only, but actual personal Righteousness, is the inviolable condition of its entrance. Guilt is real; but the placing the emphasis on Guilt is quite unbiblical.

5. Hence it was not merely (as has been sometimes said) to lead men to *Repentance* (and so to Forgiveness) that Christ died. This mistake arises from confounding the condition of entrance to the Kingdom *as present* with entrance into it in its final and eternal form, and from forgetting that the Kingdom is something that must come in its power from God. Repentance is the gate of entrance to the Kingdom here, but, as regarded in the future, the only entrance to it is through the narrow door of personal

Righteousness. Something more than Repentance is necessary for Salvation. Salvation on Repentance was the Jewish doctrine; the Gospel must bring something more powerful to men—something far deeper, even *Righteousness of Heart and Life*. The Kingdom must come with such power into men's hearts as shall change or renew them, and make them in spirit and in truth the children of God and the heirs of His Kingdom. And all this must be provided for and offered to *sinful* men who have not yet repented. As long as religion was conceived in a legal and external manner, to lead men to Repentance may have seemed sufficient; but, under the searching spiritual teaching of Jesus, Repentance becomes *but the turning-point* where a man begins to *seek* the Righteousness of the Kingdom. Moreover, under a deepened sense of sin, when can the sinner feel sure that he has repented truly or deeply enough to secure the Divine Forgiveness? Is not this still that Salvation by works which has ever proved itself ineffectual? The Gospel of the Kingdom is Salvation wholly through Grace, and brings the Divine Forgiveness and acceptance to sinners on grounds other than anything in themselves, and it can thus impart an assurance of the Divine favour such as no self-introspection or dependence on the sufficiency of our Repentance can give. At the same time, we need not exclude the thought that the Cross would lead men to Repentance. It has so many aspects, that we are more likely to err by exclusion than by inclusion. The Grace that should come to men through the Cross was certainly designed to lead them to God and to true Repentance, and, no doubt, this effect of the Cross was one that was often present to the mind of Christ. But His purpose must have gone beyond the mere leading of men to Repentance; it must have extended to their actual *Salvation*, as the members of the perfected and Eternal Kingdom of God.

The leading of men to Repentance (and so to Forgiveness of sins and to participation in all the blessings of the Kingdom of God) is, in Dr. Hollmann's view, the one conception which gives unity to the life-work of Christ, and which sufficiently explains His thought of His death as being for men's Redemption (*op. cit.* pp. 116 f., 158-160). Without doubt, as Dr. Hollmann shows at large, Jesus continually called men to Repentance, and declared their Forgiveness and acceptance with God on such Repentance. His life and teaching failed to bring them to this, and it is not unnatural to believe that Jesus would think of His death as being able to effect that which His life-work, up to that point, had not accomplished. We get thus a real unity in the work of Christ, including His death on men's behalf. But in this, it must be noticed, Jesus would not have gone beyond the Jewish teaching, which (as Dr. Hollmann also shows) laid the stress on Repentance, and held that Repentance would bring in the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God, however (to bring in which was the real life-work of Christ), had a *Divine* side to it: it was something that came to men from God in His Grace, *based* (according to the Prophets) *on the Forgiveness of sins*; and it was *this visitation of God and declaration of Divine Grace* that was, above all, to lead men to Repentance. And Jesus died that this Kingdom might come from God in the full power of its Grace—thus winning men's hearts for God and realising His Kingdom within them. Repentance alone would not (as we have seen) be sufficient to make men partakers of the Eternal Kingdom: they must be led to real Righteousness, and this was only possible through a work of God within them. Jesus knew from His own experience that it must all come from God, through the gift of His Spirit, and that men could only be saved as they were brought into such relation to God as made them partakers of His Spirit. It was His conviction,

as the result of His experience, that it was men's sin that stood between them and the coming of the Kingdom; and He gave Himself as a sacrifice, not merely to lead men to Repentance, but to remove that *sin*. In this way we should have a complete unity brought into the life-work of Christ, and we should see Him at the same time transcending the current teaching of His day, although still in line with the more spiritual teaching of the Prophets. Jesus certainly began by preaching Repentance, but this was a turning to God that men might believe in and receive Him in the *Grace* in which He came to them. Besides, we must believe in the possibility of *progress* in the thought of Christ. If in this most important of all subjects He did not rise above the teaching of His time, it would be difficult to see in what "the originality of Jesus" consisted.

6. Another inadequate mode of stating the object of the Cross is to say *merely* (although in different forms) that it was *a manifestation of the Love of God*. Without doubt, it was this—the supreme manifestation of that Love. This is, clearly, one essential element in the Cross as it is presented in the Gospels, and it was intended that this manifestation of Divine Love should win men's hearts for God. But unless we see that Love meeting some real necessity on our behalf, we cannot see the rationality of the sacrifice. It is not reasonable for any one to sacrifice himself merely to show his love for others. As has been well said, "it (the Cross) does convince us that God is Love, and to be depended upon to the uttermost; but, had it been contrived solely for the purpose of producing this persuasion, manifestly it would not have done so. I understand and appreciate the devotion and affection of the man who steps in between my breast and the bayonet thrust, but I am only bewildered if he seeks to prove his love for me by

exposing himself needlessly when I am in no danger. I need no explanation of the self-sacrifice of the man who springs into the water to rescue me from certain death, but if, while I am safe on land, and in order to prove his love for me, he leaps into a torrent no swimmer can stem and is lost, I fail to perceive his sanity, and can only lament his useless act. We cannot lower the death of Christ to the level of such superfluous and irrelevant displays, but must believe that there was a need for the sacrifice, and that the Love in it was manifested by the recognition and satisfaction of the need" (Dr. Dods, in *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*, pp. 180, 181).

7. Again, we may believe that Jesus had in His mind the thought that His death would liberate His disciples, and others to whom it was made known, from those carnal and earthly bonds which it seemed impossible to break as long as He continued with them in the flesh, and that it would at the same time set Himself free from the limitations of a bodily life; that it was necessary for Him to die in order to become the spiritual Christ, and to reveal to men that spiritual and eternal order in which their true life was to be found, and so bring in the Kingdom of God in its true spiritual power. We may say, positively, in the light of His own teaching, that He believed it was necessary for Him to die in order that He might go to God, His Father, to receive from Him the Kingdom and come again in its power. All this is true; but it does not touch the question whether there was not in His suffering and death an essential relation to sin and redemption; whether there was not in His acceptance of this death on the Cross something which should be the *occasion* of His receiving the Kingdom, and the means of its coming in its power to men—something that was necessary to give birth to Christianity as a religion of Redemption. We may go

further and say that, apart from this aspect of the Cross, Jesus would never, in all human probability, have been more to the world than the greatest Jewish Rabbi.

8. It is also inadequate merely to say, with Ritschl, that the whole significance of the Cross is to be found in our Lord's "willing acceptance of the death inflicted on Him by His adversaries as a dispensation of God, and the highest proof of faithfulness to His vocation" (*Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 477). That our Lord's death came to Him and was accepted by Him in the fulfilment of His *vocation*, is a truth which the Gospels make very plain to us, and it is one which has been too much overlooked in forming theories of the Atonement. It is only in the light of this truth that the Cross can be rightly interpreted. But we have seen reason to believe that in His vocation, as the bringer in of the Kingdom of God, there was *included* that necessity for His death in relation to sin which is excluded by Ritschl. Ritschl has done well in exposing the fallacies involved in those theories which regard the death of Christ as a "penal satisfaction to God," as "equivalent to the penalty which through sin the whole human race has brought upon itself," and as "a *punishment*" accepted in our stead. But, as Ritschl himself remarks, "it may well be that an innocent man, who is a member of the same community with guilty men, shares the experience of the evils which the guilty have brought upon themselves as punishment" (*Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 479; see also p. 565). It may be possible so to view Christ's acceptance of His Cross as having such a relation to sin, that we see in it, not *punishment* indeed, endured by Christ, yet something *essential to His vocation*, as He through whom the Kingdom of God should come to men.

9. It is still inadequate, however, to represent this

fulfilment of His vocation in relation to sin, as Professor Harnack does, as having been mainly directed to remove from men's minds the false conception of God as a wrathful Judge (Ritschl also emphasises the removal of mistrust of God), and to show that "Mercy is mightier than Justice." "It is," he says, "in relation to these human conceptions that we have specially to regard the death of Christ. His death is thus the culminating point of the service which He rendered for sinners during His mission. This service had the single object of convincing sinners that forgiving Love is mightier than the Justice before which they tremble. If they believe this, they are reconciled. They now know God as their Redeemer, but they also know Jesus Christ as their Reconciler. This is the fundamental form of the Christian belief of the Atonement" (Professor Harnack, in *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*, p. 113). No doubt this is an important element in the Cross, although it is certainly not one of the most obvious of its immediate lessons. But while the idea of a punitive wrath needed to be taken from the mind, that of the *Holiness* of God and His utter opposition to sin needed at the same time to be more deeply impressed, all the more so in view of a revelation of His Grace. It would surely be no reconciliation to *God*—the living and true God—which did not bring men into unity, not only with His Mercy or Grace, but also with His Holiness, or with the *Holy Love* that He is. The thought of God's opposition to sin—to *real* sin—was certainly far from deep in the minds of those in the midst of whom the Cross of Christ was erected. There was nothing that those scribes and Pharisees needed more than to have their *sinfulness* brought home to them, and to have the impression of God's Holiness and of His necessary attitude towards sin deepened in their consciousness, while at the same time His forgiving Love was declared. The Holiness and Love of God are never separated in Himself, and

if men are to be brought into reconciliation with Him, it must be through something that will make them realise this unity.

10. Again, it is insufficient to represent the necessity for Christ's sufferings and death as arising, *in view of the suffering of the world*, without any special relation to setting forth the evil of *sin*. This view is forcibly presented in Archdeacon Wilson's *Gospel of the Atonement*. One can only approach the thought of the necessity of the Divine nature to suffer, he says, "when one is saddened and almost crushed by the sense of the awful suffering and misery in the world." To many, "a professed Saviour and Reconciler who had not borne these sorrows to the uttermost would be nothing." "It is through His suffering and death alone that we are assured that through the agonies of the world God is still our Father. It is this suffering that endears Him to the patient and suffering world. Christ suffered even to the bitter cry on the Cross, 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' and therefore we may suffer and not lose hold on God. What is harder still to bear: we see others suffering,—the innocent, the young, the helpless suffer the sins, the ignorance, and the hard indifference of others, and though our indignation rises against man, we can still hold fast our faith in God. There is something of the Divine in suffering; we can see that suffering is inseparable from love. The redemption of the world through Christ, and primarily by His suffering and death, is thus the supreme instance of a Law which is not yet brought home to us in general as absolutely universal and Divine. The Law revealed in the Cross is that nothing but self-sacrifice is of the least avail in the moral world, or will work any lasting good" (*The Gospel of the Atonement*, pp. 103, 104, 105, 106). No doubt, all this is true; it expresses an aspect of the Cross which has

been too greatly neglected, but which we surely cannot afford to ignore in a world so full of suffering as this is. The more one realises the awful amount of suffering there is in the world—often quite unconnected with personal sin—the more one feels how entirely worthy it would be of Him in whom God was incarnate in our midst, to take on Himself our suffering as well as our sin—how necessary, indeed, it was for Him to do so. But it was necessary for Him to take on Himself our *sin* as well as our suffering. The worst suffering comes through sin. It is the source of the only suffering that separates from God and that has permanent effects. And if Christ, while submitting to suffering as represented above, does it with express reference to the sin of the world, and so as to bring to men the assurance of the Divine Forgiveness of their sin and to save them from it, this, instead of diminishing, enhances the lessons of comfort and faith and self-sacrifice that come to us through the Cross.

To Archdeacon Wilson's main position, that the Incarnation (meaning by this the whole life and death of Christ) *is* the Atonement—the manifestation of the real unity of God and man—the answer is obvious, that it is indeed such a manifestation *in that man*, but that the very fact that He was thus crucified *by men* is an equally clear manifestation that all men by no means stand in the same unity (which is essentially ethical in its character), but that, on the contrary, many at least are living and acting, not only in separation from God, but in the direst opposition to Him. We agree in thinking that popular theories of "expiation, propitiation, ransom, substitution, intercession, blotting out transgressions with His blood," are, in many of their forms, misleading, and in danger of destroying the unity of Christ with God. But we also believe that at the root of these theories there lies a great and most important truth; that the Cross had a real relation to sin and to the

going forth of the Divine Forgiveness in the fulness of its Grace and saving power. There was something real done by Christ on His Cross in relation to sin; and the problem is how to state what this was, consistently with historical fact and with the whole of Christ's revelation of God.

II. Dr. Stevens, in his exhaustive criticism of theories of the Cross in *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, while maintaining that the Cross must be interpreted as the completion of the self-giving life-work of Jesus in bringing in the Kingdom of God, accepts only what he terms "the moral theory." Without denying that the Cross had a bearing on sin and God's Holiness as revealing them in their truth, he rejects every conception which attributes to the Cross a direct relation to sin and Forgiveness. There is much that is true and valuable in Dr. Stevens' criticisms; but a sharp division of theories into "penal" and "moral" is scarcely warranted. It may be found that the suffering of Christ had a relation to sin which cannot be rightly classed as "penal," and a relation to the Divine Forgiveness which was not as *procuring* it or making it *possible*, and that, apart from such relation to sin and Forgiveness, the "moral theory"—which any true theory of the Cross must be, whatever else it is—leaves out a very essential element of its moral power.

CHAPTER II

THE NECESSITY, NATURE, AND EFFICACY OF THE CROSS—*continued*

2. *Positive Statement*

IN endeavouring to present more definitely and coherently a doctrine of the Cross, we shall leave all theories behind us for the time and view the Cross solely in the light of its presentation in the Gospels and of its effects in the world. We have seen reason to believe that Jesus Himself not only predicted His death, but regarded it as being in some sense a sacrifice because of sin, necessary for man's redemption and for the coming of the Kingdom of God. We have seen also that as the Son of Man He would be willing to do for man whatever was needed in his relation to God, and that it was as serving men He had spoken of giving His life as a ransom ; that in view of the ushering in of the new Dispensation of Remission of sins, something would require to be done in view of sin if men were to be saved from it ; and that, if the new Covenant was to be made actual in men's experience and the many made inheritors of the Kingdom of God, something radical would need to be effected by God in their behalf. It was these requirements that were met by the Cross.

Viewing the Cross in the light of the Gospels, it was—

1. On the part of man an enormous crime against God, although at the same time it fulfilled the Divine counsels.

2. The death of Christ was that of a martyr for Truth and Righteousness' sake; it was that of the Supreme Witness for God in the world.

3. As accepted by Him as necessary for the fulfilment of His vocation, it was an act of complete obedience to the Will of God, one beyond which it was impossible to go. Viewed in this light and regarding Jesus Christ as the Representative of men, we can see in the Cross the basis of such an At-one-ment of God and man as Paul sets forth in what is termed his "mystical" view of the Atonement. There man as represented in Christ was wholly at one with God, man's will and the Divine will were identified; there man in the flesh died utterly and man in the Spirit alone lived. "If One died for all (as representing all), all died (in Him)," and if we be conformed to the likeness of His death, so shall we also be to that of His resurrection. This aspect of the Cross, which is one of great importance in view of our relation to Christ, will come before us again. In it there is a relation to both sin and Forgiveness.

4. Jesus Himself represented His sacrifice as being necessary for the Redemption of men and the coming of the Kingdom of God. These were His leading conceptions. The two are really one; for Redemption is from the hands of the enemies of God and of His Kingdom—from sin and death. It is *the Kingdom of God* that is the all-illuminating conception. To proclaim and bring in this Kingdom was regarded by Christ as His Divine vocation; it was this mission that dominated His whole life, and it was in the fulfilment thereof that He sacrificed Himself. He gave Himself up as a sacrifice, in order that the Kingdom of God might come in all the riches of its Grace and in all the fulness of its power. His sacrifice was effectual: it *did* bring in the Kingdom of God in its spiritual truth and

power. If, therefore, we ask why His sacrifice was necessary, we might seek the answer by, in the first place, considering *How* the Kingdom of God began to come through His Cross. The truth concerning this is perfectly clear. We know that the Kingdom of God began to come in the fulness of its Grace and saving power, through (1) the awakening, in men, of the sense of sin; (2) leading them to believe in and experience the Divine Forgiveness; (3) creating in their hearts love for God and devotion to His Kingdom. Now, as these results were secured through an interpretation of the Cross as being, in some real sense, a sacrifice made in view of sin,—a setting forth in Christ's person of the evil of sin and its consequences under the righteous judgment of God,—we may be certain that this is a real element in the significance of the Cross. The Cross was *necessary* in order to produce these effects, and its *efficacy* lay in its power to produce them. The question, How the suffering of Christ, the sinless One, at the hands of sinners could be a manifestation of the judgment of God on sin, will be answered immediately.

But let us try if we can discern the necessity, nature, and efficacy of the Cross, directly and simply in view of the *purpose* of the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. Jesus died *to bring in the Kingdom of God*. That is one thing we can be sure of. Now, *what* was this Kingdom of God as conceived by Him? Subjectively considered, it was the reign of God in men's hearts, and to establish it thus involved the bringing of men to God, so that His Spirit should possess their hearts and they be made the true children and heirs of God. The Cross was meant to be effectual for this. Its aim was ethical, and nothing short of that which would lead to an ethical Salvation would be the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. But the Kingdom had also, as we have seen, an *objective* aspect. As such, it was the Kingdom of God's

Grace; it was something that should come from God as His great gift to men; it was the drawing nigh of God to the sinful, and as yet unrepentant, world, with the proclamation of Forgiveness, nay, with the assurance of it as the foundation of a solemn Covenant made with men; and it was only through the coming of the Kingdom in this objective way that it could come effectually, or, in its power, subjectively. Christ therefore intended that His Cross should bring to men the assurance of the Divine Forgiveness.

If we remember what it meant for the Kingdom of God's Grace thus to come to men; how in it God Himself comes in Forgiveness to the *sinful* world, to take men, as yet sinful in themselves, into acceptance with Himself, and to make them the heirs of His eternal, sinless Kingdom, we shall see that there must have been in the Cross of Christ at least these three elements—(1) The real evil of sin and its consequences must be manifested and impressed on the world's conscience; (2) there must be an adequate ground provided on which God can take men into acceptance with Himself and make them the heirs of His Kingdom, while at the same time they are *assured* of such acceptance; and (3) there must be the adequate power that shall win men's hearts for God and fit them for His Eternal Kingdom. Let us try to show the necessity, nature, and efficacy of the Cross of Christ, in each of these respects—how “God was in Christ reconciling (atoning) the world to Himself,” coming in His Kingdom to make His dwelling in the hearts of men, His ransomed children.

1. We start from the proclamation, and even the assurance, of *Forgiveness*, as the first word of the Gospel of the Kingdom to sinful men. If we leave this out, or if we begin not here, there would be no real Gospel for the sinner—certainly not that which sounded through all

Christ's own preaching and was distinctive of Christianity. We should have just the old, mostly barren, cry, "Repent! Repent!" with nothing to move to Repentance or to encourage the despairing. In our zeal for Righteousness we must not go back to John the Baptist; we must leave no foothold for legalism. If we merely say to the sinner that God will forgive him *only* when he has adequately repented, we have really *no Gospel* to proclaim to him. He knows already all that we have to tell him. We must be able to say, "Yes, you are a sinner—a great sinner, it may be; but God loves you, and freely forgives you; return unto Him, for He has redeemed you. Accept His Forgiveness, and come to Him who says, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help.'"

But now, if God is to come to men in this Grace of Forgiveness—with such a proclamation of universal Reconciliation as forms the very foundation of the Gospel—He can only do so in such a way as shall truly *save* men and win them for His Kingdom. He can only come as that Holy Love which He is, and so that the purpose of His Love shall be accomplished. The evil of sin must be adequately manifested, so that men may be saved from it. Sin would ruin His world, destroy His children, and make His Kingdom impossible. Both the Righteousness and the Love of God require that sin shall be shown forth in all its evil and sinfulness. Merely to forgive, or to "pass over" sin, as a weak Love might seek to do, was impossible for Him who is the true and perfect Love. To forgive men without impressing on them the evil of sin so as to convince them of it and save them from it, would harm them rather than bless them. The Being who did that would be no more God, and the foundation of man's hope of ultimate good would be destroyed. The very purpose of His Grace would be thus defeated. Nor could the requirement of perfect Righteousness (of spirit) for entrance into the

Eternal Kingdom be set aside, and something easier be held out to men instead. That which would be thus opened to them would not be the perfected Kingdom of God, in which evil has been for ever triumphed over, but merely a prolongation of the present mixed and imperfect state under other conditions of existence.

The reality of sin and its evil consequences in the righteous judgment of God must therefore be made manifest. Otherwise, the Kingdom of God can never come, nor can God's Forgiveness go forth to men so as to *save* them. God does not only wish to forgive men—He has in His heart already forgiven them. But, as already said, merely to forgive them without a due sense of the evil of sin being created in them, would do them no good. It would not save them, nor bring the Kingdom. Each dispensation of Grace in the Biblical record has been preceded by such a manifestation of the evil of sin (or such an acknowledgment of it) as was calculated to create in men's minds a deep sense of its evil. In the great Evangelical announcement of the Prophets, it was only after Israel had suffered sufficiently that the declaration could go forth that his sin was pardoned and his warfare ended; and it was only through the vicarious suffering of the Servant of Jehovah that the Divine requirement (for men's own sakes) should be adequately met. If, then, God is to draw nigh to the sinful world in universal Forgiveness, there must be at the same time, or in the very drawing nigh, an adequate manifestation of the evil of sin before God, in relation to His Kingdom and to man's real well-being. Not an *expedient* adopted by God as the moral Governor of the world for the maintenance of the moral order or the vindication of His Justice, but something done by Him as the Father of men for the Salvation of His children.

This requirement was met by Jesus Christ, as the Son and Representative of Man, accepting the suffering and

death that were coming upon Him as that in which He should give Himself as a sacrifice on men's behalf such as should bring home to them the evil of sin and its consequences in the righteous judgment of God. As we shall yet see, that which came upon Christ and was accepted by Him came, not by any arbitrary transfer of guilt, but as the consequence and result of sin in the sequence of the Divine moral order which could not be turned aside even for Christ. It was therefore that the cup could not pass away from Him; but He must needs drink it, and it was thus that "the Righteousness of God" was manifested in what He suffered. If our Lord accepted His death in the spirit of the Servant of God in Isaiah, He must have looked on that which He was about to suffer as being designed to set forth the evil of sin before God so that men, seeing it, should turn from sin to God and at the same time be convinced by the sacrifice made on their behalf of the reality of His forgiving Love. It by no means follows that this is to be interpreted as bearing "penalty," or that Christ was in any sense punished by God. Of course, Christ was sinless in Himself, and the punishment of sin could not possibly come upon Him as it comes upon the sinner. But His acceptance of the Cross and of all that came upon Him as coming through the sin of men might be truly described as an *acknowledgment* on His part, as representing men, of the reality of our sin before God and of the evil that it works for Humanity in the sequence of the Divine moral order.

The expression "acknowledgment of sin" has been objected to, and there is no need to contend for a word if it seems to any one to convey the idea of something that could not be done by the sinless Christ. If it implied any transfer of guilt to Christ or any such suffering as it was impossible for a sinless person to experience, the expression would be objectionable. But if Jesus accepted His Cross as that which the sin of men had brought upon Him and

made necessary for Him to endure for their salvation; if He regarded His sufferings as the consequence of men's sin; if He believed that it was only sin that caused Him so to suffer, then, in accepting and enduring His Cross, He was acknowledging the reality and evil of sin. Not only so, but He was really enduring what were the consequences (and in this sense the punishment) of men's sins. These, in a measure, fell upon *Him*. "Truly He has borne *our* sins and carried *our* iniquities" is not merely figurative language, as we shall see more fully when we come to view the Cross as Vicarious Sacrifice. The alternative is not between the purely "judicial" and the simply "moral" theories. There is a sense in which the consequences of the sins of others may fall on the head of the most innocent. Only, we must see this as coming in the natural sequence of the Divine moral order, not as something externally appointed. While, therefore, we cannot say with Dr. Campbell that it was a "*confession*" of man's sin, since Jesus Himself was wholly innocent; nor with Dr. Moberly that it was the expression of perfect "*Penitence*," since Penitence is not conceivable on the part of one who has never sinned, the same objections do not apply to the "*acknowledgment*" of man's sin by One who could truly represent man before God, even though He Himself was wholly sinless.

This acceptance of the Cross for man's sake implies a service rendered to Humanity such as only He who, as the Son of Man, had undertaken the cause of man could possibly render or think of rendering. As already said, the acknowledgment of sin in its true sinfulness is always a necessary prelude to the going forth of the Divine Forgiveness. Not as a judicial formality, but as necessary for real salvation. But this acknowledgment may be made *representatively* for a nation or for the world. The suffering of the righteous may do it. It is just in this (as we shall see in

another chapter) that the significance and value of such vicarious suffering as is attributed to the Servant of Jehovah consists. Jesus Christ, as the Son of Man, the true Head and Representative of men, could make such acknowledgment in the name of Humanity. When we speak thus of Him as "the Head" and "Representative" of men, we are using "theological" terms, but we are at the same time stating simple fact. The Head of Humanity is He who realises in Himself the truth of man's life in its relation to God—He who knows Himself to be at once the Son of God and the Son of Man, and who is true to that consciousness. This was certainly the consciousness of Jesus Christ, and He was thoroughly loyal to it. As Son of God, He felt Himself bound to do everything that was necessary for the bringing in of His Father's Kingdom, and, as Son of Man, He recognised that it belonged to Him to do everything necessary for man, that he might stand in his true relation to God, and be blessed as a member of God's Kingdom. This was the true Divine-human consciousness of Christ. It went upwards, above all that was of this world merely, to God, the unseen Father; and it went out to all men, whom He regarded as His brethren, whom He had come to serve. His was no merely individual consciousness, but a genuinely *human* consciousness, embracing all in the sweep of its Love, recognising and standing loyal to the unity and solidarity of the race. The Head and Representative of men is the true man—the man—the Son of Man—in whom man first comes to the full consciousness of his life in its truth, both towards God and towards the race. This is what we see in Jesus Christ. But in Him it was no proud Lordship: the Son of Man—the true man—must be devoted to men, yea, the servant of men, prepared to give His very life as "a ransom for many," that God's Kingdom may come to men, so that they may find in it the realisation of their true life and Divinely intended destiny. In

virtue of that unity of the race of which Jesus was the Head, what is done by Him as "the Son of Man" is, in a very true sense, done *for* and *by* man in Him. What was done by Him *in* our Humanity was done for and remains *to* Humanity. On His Cross man's sin was so acknowledged, the evil of sin so set forth, and at the same time the Love of God for man so displayed, that the Divine Forgiveness can go forth so as to effect its gracious purpose and be proclaimed to the whole sinful world. What Jesus suffered on His Cross was sufficient to bring home to every human heart the reality and the evil of sin; and that is all that is necessary for the going forth of the Divine Forgiveness. It was no dramatic representation, merely to make an impression, but was grounded on a deep Divine necessity, if men were to be saved. It was founded in Love for man. It was absolutely necessary that this manifestation of the evil of sin should be made, and *in the very making of it* the Divine Forgiveness was going forth to sinful men. Nor was it a "transaction" as between Christ and God, as if God were merely standing outside of Christ. As we shall see more fully in another chapter, Christ was in this act *one* with God; it was God Himself that was moving in Him to this great sacrifice, as the expression of that which He is in the unity of His moral being. There is no separation between God's Love and His Holiness, and there can therefore be no conflict between them. But *this very fact* declares such an inseparable union of these qualities in one constant *Holy Love*, that nothing can ever be done out of harmony with Love, and nothing out of harmony with Holiness. The Cross was the fruit of God's Love in the heart of Christ, but just because it was this, it was the expression of His Holiness as well as of His Love. A Love that did not manifest its sense of the evil of sin—a Love that did not exclude sin from God's favour and Kingdom, and impress this fact on man—would

be no Holy Love; it would not be real *Love* at all. So that, if God's Love is not only to forgive, but to *save*, men, the utter evil of sin must be manifested and acknowledged in the suffering and death of the Son of Man through sin and for the sake of sinners.

To see how Christ could make this acknowledgment and suffer as He did, we do not need to go in search of recondite explanations. We need only to see how truly He was the Son of God and the Son of Man, in vital all-embracing union with the race. We need only to see how *perfect* was His *Love* towards both God and man. It was *this* that made Him at once the true Son of God and the true Son of Man. It was His *perfect Love* that constituted His true Divinity and His complete Humanity, and that led Him to identify Himself with us in our sin and need of Salvation. He longed for the Salvation of His brethren, and was therefore ready to endure whatever might be necessary for it. If we, in our imperfect humanity, can feel in some degree identification with others in their sin, and be willing to suffer so that they may be saved, this feeling was His in Divine world-embracing fulness. It is just here that we see the difference between Him and us. In His perfect Love (which was at once the Divine and the completely human within Him) He transcended His individuality, and became the true and representative *man*.

But if we speak thus of acknowledgment of our sin by Jesus, we do not forget that all that He did had its origin in the Fatherly Love of God towards us. The perfect Love in Him was the Divine Love, and a complete doctrine of the Cross can only be reached when we have viewed it from the Divine side (see Chap. V. of this Part).

2. In this same act the second requirement was also met—the *guarantee for the establishment of man in the Righteousness of the Kingdom*.

In Christ the true man appeared—man realising his Divine ideal of full unity with God. This unity with God is not physical, but ethical—unity of heart and thought and will, or of spirit; and it is surely a great mistake to speak as if Humanity in itself, apart from Christ, were already in this true ethical union with God. To say that man needs no atonement with God, in this sense, is to be strangely blind to the evil that darkens the world and that shows itself in every human heart. But the full ethical unity of man with God was attained by Christ, and was completely manifested in His obedience unto death. It was this that proved it—His acceptance of that exceedingly bitter cup that was given Him by the Father. All through His life He had been obedient as a Son, but this was the culmination and perfection of His obedience—to accept *anything* that was the Father's will—to be willing even to be "numbered amongst the transgressors," to *die* for sinful men. This was the fullest proof of filial obedience and of the real unity of man with God that could possibly be given. Here was the human will perfectly at one with the Divine will, and maintaining that unity in the most trying circumstances, even to the utmost sacrifice of the self. Here was revealed *in man* the Holy Love that should entirely conquer man's sin—the Love that is God in man. Here was manifested in man's Representative the Righteousness of the Kingdom in its fullest perfection. With all hell arrayed against Him, with selfishness and hate doing their very worst, the Son of Man stands firm in His obedience, and, in the power of a Love that nothing can turn aside, triumphs openly over all the powers of evil. All this, be it noted, was *in man*, in the true man, who was, as such, the Head and Representative of Humanity. Just because He was this, all that was so realised in Himself could be realised in all His brethren. Man in Christ has died to his sin and risen as a conqueror into the new life of Righteousness, which is the life of the

Kingdom. A new Humanity has arisen in His Person. God therefore is now dealing with men on a new principle—on a principle of Grace, instead of one of Law merely. In accepting as His sons and daughters those who have been so represented in Christ, and who enter into the reconciliation that His Grace thus opens up to them, He really accepts those whose Righteousness has been secured and guaranteed in that of His Son.

We can see that this is the same thing as that which Paul speaks of under the form of the antithesis of “the flesh” and “the Spirit.” The flesh represents the lower animal nature, and is, as such, the seat of sin. The aim of the whole course of the Divine education of Humanity and of its development in the higher aspects of life has been to make *the Spirit*—the Divine principle in man—ascendant over the flesh; to make the Spirit, instead of the flesh, the principle of man’s life. This Divine process reached its culmination in Christ, in whom, from the first, the Spirit was the dominant principle. It maintained its supremacy throughout the whole of His earthly conflict, and reached its final triumph and permanent victory in that utter obedience unto the death of the Cross. Here man stands forth before God, as man wholly after the Spirit: a new stage of human existence has been entered on. Man after the flesh has *died*, and a new man wholly after the Spirit has arisen before God. God therefore can deal with men on new principles of Grace, and open to them His Eternal Kingdom.

Here also we see the ground of that *assurance* of the Divine Forgiveness and acceptance in which we need to stand in relation to God. Without such assurance of our forgiveness and acceptance, the full life of Sonship—the life of the Kingdom—is impossible to us. But how are we to find it? Are we to trust in the sufficiency of our good works to recommend us to God, or in the depth of our Repentance to satisfy Him? This would simply be

the old Pharisaism in a new dress. Where there is a deep and true sense of sin, our own Repentance is found to be insufficient. If we are in earnest in our religion—in our desire to draw nigh to God with acceptance, and to enter into communion with the Most High and the All-Holy One—it is not so much the thought of God's greatness that keeps us back, as that of our own sinfulness and unworthiness before Him. Are we just to throw this feeling off, and to say that, because we have repented, He forgives it all? We cannot do so. We feel that to do so would be to damage our own moral nature. We cannot draw nigh to God as our beloved Father, with the confidence that we need, unless we can feel sure that in some way our sin has been so adequately acknowledged that He can righteously forgive and accept us; we cannot draw nigh with confidence in ourselves, but only in *Another*, in whom man has been reconciled to God; and it is in the thought of that *Other*, who is yet one with ourselves, and in whom man is at one with God and God with man, that we find God, to the peace and rest of our souls. It is thus through the Cross that God comes to us in that Forgiveness and acceptance which are the promises of His coming in His Kingdom, and to establish His new Covenant with men.

3. Through the Cross there goes forth *the power* that can win men's hearts for God and His Righteousness, that can bring the Kingdom in spirit and power into their hearts, fit them for membership in the Eternal Kingdom, and give them a good Hope of entering it.

(1) Through the Cross, as we have viewed it, the Divine Spirit proceeds to men in its ethical, saving power. The manifestation there given of the terrible evil of sin, in its Crucifixion of the Son of God; of what it works for men, and of what it cost God Himself to come to us in His forgiving Love; the mighty Love there revealed; the

Divine yearning over sinners that so expressed itself; the Forgiveness that it confers,—all operate so as to convince men of sin, and to draw their hearts from sin to God. “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself,” said Christ, according to the Fourth Evangelist. Was not His expectation warranted? We know the marvellous power which the Cross, thus regarded, exerted on the world. We know that the results justified the Saviour’s expectations, and proved the Cross to be the power of God unto the Salvation of men, drawn from the sinful world, whether Jew or Greek or Barbarian; we know that, as the centuries have rolled on their way, the Cross has still proved its power and manifested its function in the Divine moral order; we know that it still does to-day what no other influence can effect. If, where it has been made known, it has not yet literally drawn *all* men to Christ, we can at least see that no mightier power of God could have been brought to bear on this wandering world to arrest and draw it back to its true orbit, and to preserve it in its course through the attraction of the Love Divine.

(2) But we have still more in that great sacrifice of Christ as it stands before us in these Gospels. We must not forget how Jesus looked forward to *Resurrection* and *coming again* to the world, and how He sought to draw His disciples into a close personal fellowship with Himself. He was going to the Father “to receive the Kingdom,” and, having received it, He would “come again in power and glory.” It was *only then* that the Kingdom should come in the fulness of its power. This does not refer merely to a coming to judgment at “the end of the world.” It was a coming “at the end of the age” (a very different thing)—at the end of the old Jewish age—to inaugurate the new era of Grace and Redemption. He was coming to set up the Kingdom; and He *did* so come. The old “age” was ended when He died on the Cross, and the new

age begun. By that death He went to the Father, and from the Father He came again in the Spirit—in His own glory and in the glory of the Father. He died in the flesh, but, one with God, He lived in the Spirit. As man after the Spirit—that Spirit in which He was one with God, and over which, therefore, death in no form had any power—He represented man as, in the power of that Spirit, rising superior to death as well as to sin, as getting wholly beyond both sin and death. In His complete unity with God and full possession of the Spirit, He had in Himself the power to raise all men into the same life. Through the Gateway of Death—a death that took away the sin of the world and opened it to God—He went to the Father, and from the opened spiritual heavens He came again in that full unity with the Father which in His Humanity He had realised, unhampered by the body of flesh, to be Himself that quickening Spirit and abiding Presence which He had promised His disciples. When the dark cloud formed by their first distress had rolled away through the true understanding of the Cross, they found that their loved Master was still with them in Spirit and in power. Through His death He gave Himself not only *for* us, but *unto* us; through it He entered as an immanent Spirit of new life into our Humanity, able to bring to men the fulfilment of all the promises of spiritual renewal, establishment in Righteousness, and Divine indwelling, contained in that “new Covenant” which He sealed to us with His blood.

Thus not only our acceptance with God, but our *Salvation*, is secured, because Christ Himself, in His full unity with the Father, *comes in all the Grace and spiritual power of the Kingdom* to bring us into abiding union with God, and to realise His own perfect Righteousness of Sonship in all hearts that are opened to receive Him. The culmination of the Cross is thus found, as Jesus Himself taught in these Gospels, in *the coming of the Son of Man*

—the coming of the Son of Man to reign in the hearts of men, to realise in them that true Humanity which was first realised in Himself. This is the same thing as the coming of the spiritual Christ to reign in, to protect, to completely deliver, and finally save, His people. The sacrifice of His life in the flesh was necessary in order to this; the ethical influences of the Holy Spirit went forth to the world through the Cross. The Spirit could not come till Jesus was thus “glorified.” It is entirely true to say with Dr. Moberly that Calvary is only completed by Pentecost. But it is of the greatest importance to see that the Holy Spirit comes to men, not as something given in an arbitrary or external manner, but *through the Cross itself* in its appeal to the moral nature of man, and through our acceptance of it in its Divine significance. We thus see that the purpose of the Cross was wholly ethical, and can understand how, through the sacrifice of Calvary, that Kingdom of God, to establish which was our Lord’s accepted vocation, truly came in all its spiritual power to men, and how the Son of Man, as its Lord, came in His own true glory and in the glory of the Father to dwell in and save His people and the world.

It is only in the light of this presence and power of God in Christ within us that we can entertain any good hope of final entrance into the Kingdom of perfect Love and perfect life. If any man who knows his own heart seriously considers what the nature of that Eternal Kingdom (in which is all our hope) *must* be, he will surely feel it to be one of the most certain of all things, that, as he is in himself, he is unfit for that Kingdom, and that any real hope that he has of entering it must arise from what he believes God in Christ can work in him in the way of Salvation. His only sure hope must be found in contemplating Him in whom sin has been conquered and all that was against us overcome, in whom *man* is taken into

acceptance with God, in whom he has already entered on the eternal inheritance of the Kingdom, and who is able to bring all who receive Him into "the joy of their Lord." But, unless as an initial, or at any rate a real, experience, a deep sense of the evil of sin, and of its necessary evil-desert, is created in the soul, how can a man be fit for the sinless Kingdom of God?

While we have interpreted the sufferings of Christ as designed, not to work anything in God, or to "atone for" or "expiate" sin, in view of Divine Justice, but to set forth and impress on men the reality and evil of sin, we have maintained that such suffering was necessary in order that the forgiving Love of God might go forth to men so as to save them. Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin; He truly died "for our sins," vicariously, in manifestation of "the Righteousness of God," and in order to our Redemption. To this end, His *perfect obedience* unto this death of the Cross was, we have sought to show, also necessary; and it was only by this act that He, in His Humanity, came into such complete union with God as enables Him to become effectually our Saviour. We have thus been led by the teaching and facts of the first three Gospels—and, in the main, by those of the earliest Gospel of Mark alone—to what is practically the teaching of Paul and of John, although we may not adopt all their forms of statement. As we have said, however, we can only reach a complete interpretation of the Cross when we have viewed it on its Divine side. But if we will next consider the Cross of Christ as the culmination of that vicarious suffering and sacrifice which is ascribed by the Prophets to Israel as the Servant of Jehovah, we shall see yet more clearly in what sense the suffering and death of Christ were a "bearing of the sins" of men and a sacrifice on their behalf, and as such a manifestation of the evil of sin, of its fatal consequences for men, and of the righteous judgment of God

upon it. There is also another complimentary aspect, in which the Cross stands prominently forth in these Gospels, at which we shall do well to glance. Meanwhile, let us give a brief summary statement of our conclusions.

SUMMARY

1. The Synoptic Gospels show us that Jesus died in order to fulfil His mission of bringing in the Kingdom of God, and that He regarded His death as being, in some sense, *a redeeming sacrifice*, necessary if the Kingdom of God was to come, and certain to bring it.

2. The Kingdom of God is, first of all, the Kingdom of God's *Grace*, in which He draws nigh to men in Forgiveness. The sacrifice of Christ therefore had a direct relation to the going forth of the Divine *Forgiveness*, and was necessary in order to this; not, however, to the *procuring* of this Forgiveness.

3. The Divine Forgiveness or Remission of Sins that comes to men through the Cross is not the Forgiveness of individual sinners on their Repentance (which was always open to men), but the Forgiveness of God going forth *to the whole sinful world*, in order to lead men to Repentance and to make them members of God's Kingdom. It comes as the proclamation of a Divine amnesty to men, but it is of no avail unless it is accepted by them so as to make them loyal members of the Kingdom, and followers of that Righteousness which alone can give final entrance into it.

4. The essential significance of the Cross in relation to the going forth of the Divine Forgiveness and the coming of the Kingdom, lay in Jesus' acceptance of that which came upon Him as being that which should convince men of sin

and turn them from sin to God. If the Kingdom was ever to come in in its spiritual truth and power it was absolutely necessary that men should be convinced both of the reality and evil of sin, and of the reality and greatness of God's forgiving Love. Only thus could the Divine Forgiveness effectually come to them. Christ suffering what man's sin brought upon Him was truly "bearing the sin" of others. That which came upon Him was the consequence of sin, its direct result, and He accepted and bore it, triumphing over it in the power of the Spirit for the sake of the salvation of others. In so accepting and enduring His Cross, He made such acknowledgment of man's sin and manifestation of God's righteousness as was necessary for the going forth savingly of universal Forgiveness.

5. This interpretation of the Cross (which is essentially that of Apostolic Christianity) is reached through the Spirit that comes to men through Christ—above all, through the Cross itself—awakening the moral sense, "convicting of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," and revealing the loving purpose of God in Christ.

6. The Kingdom of God is, subjectively, God's reign in men's hearts; and the sacrifice of Christ was such a manifestation of God's Love as was calculated not only to convince men of sin and to lead them to the experience of the Divine Forgiveness, but to win their hearts for God and His Kingdom.

7. The Kingdom of God is, in its consummation, God's perfected and Eternal Society or Family of Holy Love. The perfect love and obedience of Christ in man's name on the Cross gave the guarantee of man's becoming fit for membership in that Kingdom. In this light, the Cross was the opening of a new creative epoch in the history of man.

8. The Kingdom, in its power, is inseparable from Him who is its Lord and Bearer for Humanity. The Redemption of men is inseparable from their Redeemer. By His death, Christ was freed from the limits of the flesh, and, having done all that was necessary for man's Redemption, He came again as the living, ever-abiding Saviour in His unity with God and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER III

THE CULMINATION OF VICARIOUS SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE

APPROACHING the Cross along those lines which, as a matter of historical fact, led up to our Lord's acceptance of it, we see in it the culmination of that vicarious principle which seems to enter so deeply into life, and is the witness, not only to the solidarity of the race, but to the unity of life itself. It is in this, when it becomes a voluntary sacrifice for the sake of others, that we behold the highest manifestation of the Divine in man. Was not the loftiest point in the life of Moses reached when he was willing to have his name blotted out of the Book of God rather than that the sin of his people should not be forgiven? and did not Paul stand nearest his Master when he felt that he could wish himself to be anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake, his kinsmen according to the flesh? It was in this spirit that Jesus was willing to accept the Cross and *die*, if only men, His brethren, might thereby be saved. He thus stands as the Head of a long line of voluntary sufferers for Righteousness' sake and for the sake of others, and as the supreme Representative and Fulfiller of that vicarious suffering which, as we have seen, had such a large place in later prophecy and psalm, and which belonged to Israel as the Servant of Jehovah. This conception of vicarious sacrifice was to some extent expressed in the later sacrificial system, although, as it was made to devolve on *animals*, it was liable to great perversion; but it had its

roots deep down in the experience of the best in the nation. It is along this line of human suffering in the cause of God, and for the sake of others, that we can best understand the great sacrifice of Christ. As has been well said, "It is because Christian divines have dwelt too much on the Old Testament system of sacrifices, and too little upon the figures of Jeremiah, the suffering remnant, and the Servant of the Lord—too much upon the animal types of the Cross, and too little upon the human forerunners of Christ—that their explanations of the vicarious character of the Passion and death of the Redeemer have been so often mechanical and repulsive. . . . If we are to get our fellows to believe in the redemptive virtue of Christ's Cross, it will be by proving to them that vicarious suffering and its ethical value are no arbitrary enactments of God, but natural to life, and inevitable wherever sin and holiness, guilt and love, encounter and contend" (Professor G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 172).

We have seen what a large and important place this conception of vicarious suffering occupies in prophecy: let us now seek to understand something of its significance and redemptive efficacy, and to see its complete fulfilment in the sacrifice of Christ.

What is vicarious suffering? It is suffering that falls upon a person, or it may be on a community, because of a relationship to others in a corporate or organic unity. It may not always be conscious of itself as bearing suffering because of the sins or wrong-doing of others; but in its highest form it is the voluntary acceptance, by the righteous, of that suffering that is Divinely attached to human sin. It is, for one thing, the acknowledgment, on their part, of the justice or righteousness of this linking of suffering to sin. If we ask why suffering is thus linked to sin, the answer is, we think, plain enough. It is not because of some arbitrary

appointment of God ; it is not because He has any pleasure or satisfaction in beholding men or nations suffering ; it is not merely for the sake of punishing ; but it is because such suffering is *inevitable*. It is inevitable because sin is a departure from the Divine order, and cannot but be followed by suffering, and (in the long-run, if not checked, and men restored) by disaster and ruin. The moral order is as real as the physical—the physical order only serves it—and departure from either ensures similar consequences. The vicarious sufferer sees and acknowledges the justice and necessity of this, and takes that suffering, so far as he can, on to himself, in such acknowledgment and in order that *others* may be saved. In these prophetic announcements of Forgiveness which we have had before us, suffering is always implied as having been endured. It is even regarded as having an expiating efficacy. The Book of Consolations opens with the assurance that Jerusalem had “received of the Lord’s hand double for her sins.” All throughout the book it is implied that Israel had suffered for his sins (Isa. xl. 1, 2, xlii. 24, xlviii. 10, li. 17, 22). It was *the fulness of the suffering due for sins* in that Dispensation that was to be accepted by the Servant of Jehovah as he is pictured in Isaiah liii., so that Redemption should come not only to Israel, but to “the nations” also. It was as bearing *this* that his (personally undeserved) sufferings were to be interpreted.

Wherein consists the redemptive value of such vicarious suffering? This is the real question to be answered. If it be said that the picture of the suffering Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah is that of one who makes “atonement through the innocent bearing the sins of the guilty” (Professor Davidson on “Prophecy,” in Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible*, iv. 123), and if the Cross of Christ be interpreted in the light of this conception, the question which most of all calls for consideration is: What is it that gives value to such suffering in the

sight of God? It cannot be the mere fact of suffering, or that suffering is borne by one person instead of by others. God can have no pleasure or satisfaction in suffering in itself. It is the *effect* of such suffering that gives to it its value—that which it *works* for God in the world. It is meant—

1. To manifest the evil of sin, and to impress men with it. This is the meaning, from the ethical point of view, of the presence, in the world, of suffering inevitable on departure from the Divine order. It is meant, for one thing, to make men see and feel the evil of sin. The virtue of vicarious suffering, in one aspect of it at least, consists in this, that the sufferer takes upon himself the suffering that is the result of sin—takes, that is, the sufferings that come upon him in this light—so that, by his bearing of such suffering others may be saved. The sufferer himself is innocent; his sufferings are wholly undeserved; yet they are permitted by God to come upon him; and he accepts them as that which is due to the sins of those with whom he is identified, or with whom he voluntarily identifies himself.¹

2. It leads to the expression of Forgiveness on God's part. Through such suffering, accepted thus, the evil of sin has been sufficiently acknowledged and set forth. The suffering necessary to deter men from sin and to show its real evil has been sufficiently borne; the evil of sin has been

¹ The nature of the vicarious suffering of the Servant of Jehovah is well stated by Dr. Skinner in his *Isaiah* (ii. 134): "The essence of the Servant's sacrifice lies in the fact that, whilst himself innocent, he acquiesces in the Divine judgment on sin, and willingly endures it for the sake of his people. And it is the perception of this truth on the part of the people that brings home to them the sense of their own guilt, and removes the obstacle which their impenitence interposed to Jehovah's purpose of salvation. The suffering of the innocent on behalf of the guilty is thus seen to be a moral necessity, since it was only through such sufferings as the sinless Servant of the Lord was alone capable of, that punishment could reach its end in the taking away of sin and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness."

adequately manifested ; the moral order has been maintained ; the well-being of men in view of God's great purpose for them has been secured, and the Grace of the Divine Forgiveness can therefore go forth to sinners so as to save them.

3. It leads to Repentance and to Righteousness on the people's part. Moved both by what they see another suffer for their sakes and by the forgiving Love that visits them to redeem them, their hearts are won from sin to God and His righteousness. As it is expressed in the twenty-second Psalm, " All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord."

4. It diffuses *the true spirit*—even that Spirit of Christ which was in the sufferer. It leads others to the same acknowledgment of the evil of sin, to the same recognition of the justice and necessity of such suffering, to the same desire to serve God, yea, to the same readiness to die to self, and to suffer for the sake of others, in the great cause of God and of man.

These are, we think, briefly stated, the leading elements in vicarious suffering—those which constitute its value ; and all this is just what we see in its fulness in Christ. He accepts the suffering that comes upon Him through the sins of men and bears it for their sake, in order that men, seeing in His suffering the evil of sin in what it works on the sinless Son of Man—the Representative of man in his truth—they may turn to God and be saved. In relation to God, it was such an acknowledgment of man's sin and manifestation of its evil nature and work as was necessary before the Divine Forgiveness could go forth in all the fulness of its saving power. It was not that God was withholding forgiveness : in the very Cross of His Son His forgiving Love was supremely manifested, but it could

not come to men with saving power until that manifestation of the evil of sin had been made. Suffering because of sin there had been, even vicarious suffering for sin; but there had as yet been no adequate setting forth of the real evil of sin and of its fatal consequences to mankind. The vicarious suffering of the past could only represent the temporal evils that come to men through sin: our Lord's suffering set forth these evils in their spiritual and eternal aspects—in their bearing on man as destined to be a son and heir of God.

It was the manifestation of the Divine Judgment on sin—of “the Righteousness of God” as Paul states it. There *is* a righteous judgment of God on sin, which, owing to the solidarity of humanity, may fall on the most innocent. The sin of the world in this way lighted on Christ and the righteous judgment of God, as it works on in the Divine moral order, was thus made manifest. Sin is its own punishment: it is punished by increasing sinfulness. It was the growing hardness of men's hearts, the ever-increasing power of the lower nature not subjected to the higher, of “the flesh” as opposed to “the Spirit,” which found culminating expression in the rejection and crucifixion of Christ. As we have sought to show elsewhere, had not Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, triumphed over it all, this deed of sinful men would have proved the destruction of man as conceived by God; it would have been that decisive victory of the flesh over the Spirit, the result of which would have been the utter death of man as a spiritual being.¹

¹ See *The Gospel of Reconciliation or At-one-ment*, chap. vii. Dr. Fairbairn, in *Christ in Modern Theology*, says truly that the atonement was the method by which “God has so judged sin in the very home of the sinful as to achieve the salvation of the sinner,” but he does not show what that method was. See also Lofthouse, in *The Ethics of Atonement*, where the Cross is said to be the manifestation of sin “in its exceeding sinfulness.”

All this result of the sin of the world, Jesus, in His vicarious sacrifice, suffered to fall on Himself, in order that men might be saved—giving His life thus as a ransom for many, becoming the slain Lamb of the New Redemption, establishing the New Covenant of Grace and spiritual Salvation in His Blood. As with the Servant of God in Isaiah, this “bearing of the iniquity of us all,” this “making His soul (or life) an offering for sin,” should be the means whereby “He should see His seed, prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord prosper in His hands.” By this means He should “justify many,” or “make many righteous,” because through what they witnessed in His suffering they should be convinced of their sin, and, turning to God, be forgiven and saved.

That which Jesus thus did could not have been done by any one (nor even have entered the mind of any one) less than He was. The Ideal had been set forth, in the Prophets, of one who should bear at least the *nation's* sin, but no one had as yet come forward to make that Ideal a complete Reality. Still less could any one be found who could set forth the spiritual and eternal evil consequences of sin—who could take on himself the burden of the sin of the world. While, therefore, in His Cross, Christ appears as the culminating example of that vicarious suffering which is found, in some measure, everywhere in the world, in that very culmination He is seen to be *unique*, and His sacrifice of Himself unique of its kind. It was made *with a direct reference to the sin of the world* in its relation to God and His Eternal Kingdom, in order that the Divine Forgiveness might go forth so as to save men, and the blessings of the Kingdom of God come to all. Such a thought could only have entered the mind of One who was, in a full and unique sense, the Son of God and the Son of Man, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Spirit.

And of course it is in this supreme vicarious sacrifice

of Christ that we behold the redeeming influences of such vicarious suffering in their fulness. Nothing has so impressed men with a sense of the evil of sin, nothing can so create the conviction of the certainty and necessity of its exclusion from God and His Eternal Kingdom, as that which Christ suffered on the Cross. Nothing can so bring to men the assurance of the Divine Mercy and Forgiveness. Nothing is so powerful to lead them to Repentance. And from nothing does the Spirit of true Righteousness come to men in such power. The Spirit in all those vicarious sufferers was the very Spirit of Christ; from them it proceeded in some measure to others; its power in men's hearts was deepened through their action; but it is only from Him in whom that Spirit dwelt in its fulness, and in whose sacrifice it found complete expression, that the Spirit comes in all its Divine power to the Redemption and Salvation of men, to their full life as God's children, and to fit them for membership in the Eternal Kingdom of that Love which is the Life of the Spirit.

In the Cross, therefore, as the culmination of vicarious sacrifice, we see that Christ suffered that which was necessary for the going forth of the Divine Forgiveness to the sinful world, and for the bringing to bear on it of those Divine influences which should lead to its Salvation. Not, we once more repeat, that there is any merit or value before God in suffering *per se*, or that God has any pleasure in it, or finds any satisfaction from it, or that any abstract Justice demands that one must suffer for others; but in order that, for men's own sakes, the real evil of sin might be manifested, so that, through the coming to them of God in His holy, forgiving, and quickening Love, they might be saved.

With respect to *suffering in general*, although Christ accepted His Cross with reference to sin and its conse-

quences, His vicarious suffering teaches us a much-needed and most helpful lesson. All the suffering that falls on men and women in this world is not directly due to sin; although, doubtless, could we trace all our experience back to its original sources, we should find that all suffering has its origin in some departure from the Divine laws of life. But it often falls on the innocent, and on those who have not brought it on themselves through their own sin or conscious departure from what is right. The world is full of such suffering, and its presence creates that which is the greatest difficulty in many minds (and in still more *hearts*) in relation to Faith in God. Of course such suffering does not, as many seem to think, come to us directly from the hand of God, but as a consequence of our place in the order of Nature and as members of a common Humanity. If it were in every case a direct Divine infliction, the difficulty would be insuperable. But, as Herbert Spencer said in one of his last writings, however merciless the cosmic process may seem, there is no *vengeance* anywhere to be found in it. If so, there must be a *reason* why all this suffering is the lot of man. From a purely physical point of view, it seems to be something inevitable, owing to the very laws that give and maintain our life. It is something incidental to life. If we receive this "good" from the hand of the Lord, we must be prepared to receive also that "evil." Evil is the shadow that seems ever in *time* to attend the good. But, from an *ethical* point of view, is not suffering here because of the nature that man of necessity stands rooted in—an earthly and animal nature—making him prone to be carried away by the things of "the flesh" and of time and sense—the things of a perishing world—while God has created us for the higher, eternal life of the Spirit? If there were no suffering and death in this world, we should never seek a higher and better world. This seems to be the *ethical*

reason for that *order* which makes suffering in general a fact in human experience. And the indiscriminate manner in which it seems to fall—coming often on those who are innocent and worthy—is to be explained in the light of the great truth of the unity of the race, or the solidarity of mankind. We all belong to one common Humanity, from our relation to which we receive all that is good in our life, and we must therefore be prepared to take our share in the evils incident to the existence of the race in this world, under that necessary Divine order which makes suffering a common human experience.

The help that comes to us in view of suffering in general from Christ's acceptance of His Cross, is seen in this. Christ's acceptance of His Cross of unmerited and cruel suffering was an acknowledgment of the Necessity, and of the Justice and Goodness, of that Divine order which makes suffering a fact of human experience, and which so often seems harsh and indiscriminating in its operation. He bowed to the Divine necessity for the suffering of the innocent through the sins of the guilty, which is a part of the wider experience of suffering in the world. He did this because He belonged to our Humanity—because He was a member—even the Head—of a race which is a unity. And He thus teaches *us* how to take the share of suffering that comes to us as members of a race that is truly *one*—to accept it as that which God permits in His all-embracing order of the world to come upon *us*, even though undeserved, and not coming directly from His hand, and to bear it in the spirit of one who seeks to render service to, or to help, his fellows in so accepting and bearing suffering. Each one who so suffers strengthens his fellow-men to suffer, and helps to bring to them a sense of the goodness of God in and through all the suffering that is in the world. And for ourselves, is not this the spirit that "sweetens pain"? This is that Spirit of Christ which most

truly serves God and helps a suffering Humanity, while at the same time it comforts and sustains ourselves, yea, brings Christ Himself, the great Helper, within us. In other words, we learn to accept and bear our undeserved suffering *vicariously*, as the Cross that God suffers to light on us, through our acceptance and bearing of which some measure of good may come to the world and to our own souls.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIUMPH OVER THE POWER OF EVIL

THERE is yet another aspect in which the death of Christ comes prominently before us in these Gospels, viz., as *the final conflict with the Power of Evil, and the complete Victory over it.*

This is an aspect of the Cross which has been too much neglected in modern times, probably because of the extravagant theories which some of the early Fathers, with many of whom it was a leading conception (although it is incorrect to say that this was "the only theory held in the Church for a thousand years"), were led to form concerning it. The Gospels make it very plain that this was an aspect in which Christ Himself viewed His Cross.¹ It is one also that can give us all that an Evangelical conception of the Cross requires ; it is in full harmony with what we have already seen, and it carries us on to that which is the most important element in Evangelical religion, viz., that spiritual presence and indwelling of Christ which is the *proof* of our reconciliation with God and the power of our complete Salvation. It enables us to interpret the whole of our Lord's experience in a perfectly natural way, and in entire harmony with all the facts of His history as the Founder of the Kingdom of God.

This view is directly suggested by our Lord's own teaching, and by the way in which His death came to Him

¹ The Cross is presented in this light in Dean D'Arcy's *Ruling Ideas of Our Lord.*

as a matter of historical fact. Jesus, as we have seen, always spoke of His Cross as coming to Him at the hands of *sinners*, and, historically regarded, it was something that happened to Him in the course of His faithful fulfilment of His mission. It was His truth and righteousness, His goodness and His fidelity to God and to the highest well-being of man, in the presence of human selfishness, earthliness, and the self-righteousness and bigoted hatred of false and formal religion, that brought His death upon Him. He saw it coming, and in due time He told His disciples that it must be expected: "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." All throughout His course He felt that He was confronted by a mighty Power of Evil, with which He was contending, and which had in some way obtained an awful mastery over men, even to the inflicting on them of disease and death. These things did not come from His Father, but from this hostile Power—this enemy of God and man. This Evil Power, He felt, was constantly active, and violently operating against Him and against His work on man's behalf, oppressing and seeking the ruin of humankind. The Kingdom of God was opposed by a Kingdom of Darkness, God Himself by "the Evil One." Whether our Lord Himself believed in a personal Satan, or simply adopted the popular modes of speech in order to express what He felt concerning the Power of Evil, it is certain that to Him that Power was awfully real. And whatever may be our own belief concerning "a personal Evil Power," that there is a terrible Power of Evil personal or impersonal, no one who has his eyes open to history and experience can doubt. Before our Lord could commence His ministry He had to meet and measure His strength with the Power of Evil in its most specious forms. He had told His disciples of His own fierce personal conflict with the Tempter—how Satan

had sought Him out in the wilderness, and striven to ruin Him and His cause. All throughout His course He felt Himself opposed by the same hostile Influence, and His effort was directed to the annulling of its work. In His ministry of healing, it was the work of the Evil One that He was undoing—the malign influence that had brought both sickness and death on men. The poor woman whom He healed was one “whom *Satan* had bound, lo! these eighteen years.” It was the same Foe that sought to hinder His spiritual work, and to destroy the cause of God in the world. When the tares were sown among the wheat, it was “an enemy—even ‘*Satan*’”—who had done this; it was the same enemy that snatched the word out of thoughtless hearts, that assailed even His disciples, that sought Peter, “that he might sift him as wheat.” The sin of sins, for which He said there was no forgiveness, was to ascribe His work, done through the Spirit of God, to the Power of Evil. The æonian fire was that which had been kindled “for the Devil and his angels.” Whatever may be said concerning demoniacal possession, Jesus certainly, according to the representations of these Gospels, treated it as real, and carried Himself as one who was engaged in a hot conflict with evil spirits. His mission was to dethrone, to conquer and destroy, the Power of Evil. When His disciples returned to Him, rejoicing that the evil spirits were subject to them, “I saw,” He said, “*Satan* as lightning fall from heaven.” As He proceeded on His course, the conflict with this Evil Force, which found its embodiment (or evil incarnation) in evil men, increased in depth and intensity, till at last it came to what may be truly described as a close “death-grapple in the darkness” with the infernal Foe.

One of the most striking sayings with reference to His death is given by Luke (xxii. 53): “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” Again, “The Son of Man is

betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark xiv. 41). These sayings reveal to us very clearly one aspect at least in which our Lord regarded His death. They show us that, to His mind, sin, or the Power of Evil, had been suffered for the time to array itself in all its might against Him. *Now* was its hour, in the wise permission of God. It was Evil that was moving against Him; *not God in His Justice, but Evil*—that terrible, mysterious Power of Evil that opposed God, that had worked such havoc on man, that would utterly ruin and destroy him if he were not ransomed from its grasp. Now it was to be suffered to do its worst against Him. Now He was to meet the Foe in his own dark realm of *Death*. The enemy had obtained opportunity and permission to put forth all his power. He accepted the challenge. He would meet the Destroyer in all the fulness of his might—He would go down into the awful darkness of his abode, and wrest man out of his deadly grasp. This is the impression that is made on our mind as to how this fearful conflict must have appeared to Christ. No wonder that in Gethsemane He shrank from this last awful struggle, which no mortal man dared undertake. For the worst of all was, that man's sin gave the enemy power over him—even the power of Death. How could men be delivered unless their sin was annulled or taken away? *He* must take it away. But did not this mean that He must take the sinner's place, and let the awful blow light on Himself instead of on men? As long as sin reigned over men, must not death, yea, the dark death of the soul, reign also? But what did this mean for Himself? What would it be for Him to take upon Himself man's sin, to be "numbered amongst the transgressors," to meet the sinner's death? Might it not mean separation from God? Did it not involve utter death? No wonder that He pleaded, "Father, if it be possible, take this cup from Me." But "He was heard in that which He feared." The assurance was given

Him that He should "conquer in this mortal fray." As we read the Gospel story, we seem to see all hell let loose against the Son of Man. We behold Him betrayed by a false friend and disciple, confronted by false witnesses whom He could not confute, tried and condemned with no semblance of Justice, handed over to the godless powers of this world to be sentenced to the shameful Cross, nailed to that Cross, hung up there, a spectacle to Heaven and Earth, between two common evil-doers, mocked, taunted, derided, tortured in body and in soul, *left* to all this, "delivered up" to it by God Himself, so that the only terms in which His feeling could find expression were these words of the 22nd Psalm, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But He accepts it all. It is all necessary for the defeat of sin and the triumph of the Kingdom of God. Sin must be suffered to do its worst on Him, so that it may be once and for all "condemned in the flesh," and the power of the sin-conquering Spirit of Love be made man's for ever. Evil must be defeated, if the Kingdom of God is to come to men. So He bears it all; He endures to the end. His Love for God and man—the Love of God in Him—is mightier than all the hate and all the malignity of the Foe. As we witness the close of that awful scene we feel that He has conquered. Evil has done its very worst, and the Son of Man has triumphed over it. His Resurrection, of course, witnesses to His victory; but, even apart from this, as we stand reverently before that Cross when the darkness of the sixth hour is lifted, and look once more upon that face after all is over, we behold the seal of victory upon it; we feel certain that Love, not hate, has triumphed—that God, not evil, holds the field—that man has been ransomed, delivered from his deadliest foe. By that Cross of Christ the Power of Evil has been for ever broken, and the dark reign of Death is over—

“O sin of man, O Love of God,
In this dread hour your strength is tried,
And victory remains with Love—
The Christ of God, the Crucified.”

Viewing the subject simply in the light of that moral order which is the Divine order, and in which God is moving to the establishment of His Kingdom, we behold here the triumph of God over the evil that opposed Him in His gracious purpose towards His human children. We see here, again, how He comes to men in spite of their sin, in His forgiving Love, and to make them His sons and heirs. Not only has the evil of sin been fully manifested, but its weakness in the presence of man possessed by the Spirit—its judgment by God—has been proved. Evil has done its worst in putting the Christ to death; but from death He has emerged triumphant; man in Him has come forth in newness of life. Here we behold revealed *in man* that Love Divine which shall yet triumph wholly over sin, so that sin can be reckoned a thing of nought; it can be “cast behind the back of God,” according to the bold figure of the prophet, to be remembered no more for ever. God has in Christ so “atoned the world to Himself” that He can treat it as a world in which sin has been conquered, “not imputing their trespasses unto them,” but making men “the Righteousness of God” in Christ. In Christ, their Head, a new race of men has come into being, in whom Love has triumphed over self, the Spirit over the flesh, God Himself, in man, over the evil that opposed Him; so that now the Kingdom of God can come to men in its power. Sin at its worst has been met and defeated. Life has triumphed over Death. The Christ, who has so conquered, can come in all His triumphant power into the inmost hearts of men, in the same might, to deliver them. This is the true “coming again” of Christ “in His own power and glory, and in the glory of His Father,” after He

had thus won the victory which ensured the establishment of the Kingdom of God. *It is His coming into our hearts in all the power of the Kingdom.* We have here the great turning-point in that mysterious, but most real, conflict that has been from the beginning of the world waged between God and Evil, and the revelation of the power by which the final victory shall be gained. From this time onward the final triumph of God and of His purpose for man is assured: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." In whatever *form* Jesus Himself looked for the coming of the Kingdom from God, the event has shown that *we* must interpret it primarily in a spiritual sense, which was also that which was deepest with Christ. To materialise these sayings is to lose their significance: to ignore the light which the event cast on them is to make them seem words of fanaticism rather than of sober, but glowing, confidence of triumph.

In this great victory of the Son of Man, gained in His service of man to the uttermost, we see once more how truly He gave His life "a ransom for many"; how truly "the new Covenant" was established in His Blood, so that God Himself can come to us, not only forgiving our sins, but to put, according to His word, "a new Spirit within us," to write His Laws on our hearts, to dwell in us, to make us His people, and to be evermore our God. We see how truly, through this complete sacrifice of Himself, which was yet the complete gaining of Himself in full union with the Father, He has brought in the Kingdom of God in its power, so that, in its coming, the Son of Man Himself comes "a second time without sin, unto Salvation." It was always as coming again from the Father, that Jesus said He should appear in the glory of the Kingdom. And here, having conquered sin and death and triumphed over them openly, having "opened the Kingdom of God to all be-

lievers," He comes in that Spirit and power which can bring the Kingdom into human hearts, and make men the members of it, in its eternal blessedness and glory. To us, His brethren, weak through the flesh, and tried by suffering, this conquering Lord and Saviour *comes* in His saving and supporting power. It is not merely pardon in the name of a Christ at a distance that we receive, nor is it only to Repentance that we are led; but, by this act of sacrifice and victory, Christ Himself comes to us to be our Salvation. And it is not only from sin that He saves us; but, enduring the uttermost of *suffering*, He enables us to accept the suffering that befalls us, and to bear it in the same spirit. He enables us even to accept that suffering that comes to us as the consequence of our sins, sure that victory shall yet be ours. He enables us to accept not only the whole of the Divine order in the world, however hardly it may press upon us individually for the time, but even the *disorder* that sin has introduced, with all that proceeds from it, and thus He reconciles us completely to God, and gives us "the victory that overcometh the world." "Be of good cheer," He says; "I have overcome the world," and He comes to us Himself to make us sharers in His victory. Above all, He enables us to die to self and sin, and makes us willing, in His own Spirit, to take up and bear the Cross for the sake of others. While the relation of the Cross to Forgiveness is of great importance, its relation to the actual Salvation of men is of still greater moment. Too often has the one thing been separated from the other. But if we see in the Cross the great final conflict of Jesus Christ with the Power of Evil and His complete victory over it, we see in it not only a ground for man's acceptance with God, but the living power of God unto man's Salvation. As we shall see more fully in the next chapter, what we behold is, not merely a God who, sitting in some high heaven, forgives our sins, but One who, in that Son of Man,

consummates the great conflict with Evil, which He has been waging since the world began ; whose Holy Love has gained the victory, and who, in that same Holy Love, comes to repeat that victory in every soul of man, and to make men His co-workers, till Evil is abolished for ever and His Kingdom established over all. It is God Himself that thus comes in His Kingdom to set it up in our hearts, to make us His sons and daughters and the heirs of Salvation, to inspire and enable us, as the soldiers of the Cross and in its spirit and might (which are those of God Himself in man), to carry forward the holy warfare till the last remnant of Evil has disappeared and God's Kingdom alone endures.

“Then the end ;—beneath His rod
Man's last enemy shall fall ;
Hallelujah ! Christ in God,
God in Christ, is all in all.”

Note.—Were we free to use here the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews, we might strengthen the statement of this chapter considerably. In the Fourth Gospel the course of Christ is depicted as a continuous conflict between Light and Darkness, Life and Death, which reaches its culmination on the Cross, where the Light and Life gain the victory through sacrifice. Christ Himself, as He sees His Cross approaching, says, “Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the Prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself” (xii. 31, 32). Again, after speaking of His going to the Father and coming again, He says, “The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me ; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do” (xiv. 31). “Now,” He says once more, “the Prince of this world is judged” (lit., “hath been”) (xvi. 11). In chap. x., also, He represents His death as that of the Good Shepherd, who

faces the wolf that comes to destroy the sheep, and who even lays down His own life to save them. The wolf destroys the Shepherd, but the Shepherd saves the sheep, and He Himself rises again from death.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read: "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that *through death* He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (ii. 14, 15). And again: "Consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin*" (xii. 3, 4).

The Fathers also, as is well known, looked on the death of Christ as having a direct relation to Satan, or the Power of Evil; and although the modes in which this was sometimes represented seem even ridiculous to us to-day (to whose minds Satan has not the reality that he had to theirs), there was a profound truth underlying their strange theories. They had in view an aspect of the Cross which was strongly present to the mind of Christ, and which we have too greatly lost sight of. This follows, of course, whether we personalise the Power of Evil or not. Personality, we cannot but think, has some relation to *intensity*. But, whether personal or not, there is assuredly a Power of Evil working in the world against God—an *accusing* Power also in relation to man, as Satan is pictured in Job, and as he appeared to Luther, in a way that was deeper than mere imagination, although not necessarily as a personal presence. It was that Foe that Christ met and conquered on the Cross, taking away both his accusing and his destroying power, and it is with that same Foe that we are all called to do battle for God, whether in our own selves or in the world around us, with the assuring words of the Captain of

our Salvation to strengthen us: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!" One of our greatest needs to-day is to recognise how truly the Power of Evil finds in "the World" regarded as an end in itself the means whereby the soul is ensnared and cheated of the higher Divine and Eternal Life for which God has created us and to which we have been redeemed in Christ.

CHAPTER V

AS RELATED TO GOD: GOD IN CHRIST; THE CROSS, VIEWED ON ITS DIVINE SIDE

IN what has gone before, we have been for the most part viewing the Cross on its human side, as its necessity appeared to the human consciousness of Christ, and as it appears to us in our human sin and need. We have indeed also taken into view the Holy Love of God, in His purpose to save men in an Eternal Family or Kingdom. But we have been obliged to approach the subject on its human side rather than on its Divine side. Let us now reverently endeavour to contemplate it from the Divine point of view, so far as that is revealed to us. Only when we shall have done this shall we be in a position truly to interpret the Cross.

It is clear that we must see in the Cross the manifestation of the Love of *God Himself*, and not merely of the *man* Christ Jesus. We must not think of it as being only the sacrifice of a man on our behalf. The Christian Church has always seen in the Cross the supreme manifestation of the Love of *God*. It had its origin in that Love. If it was a sacrifice for sin, it was God that conceived it, and that gave up His Son to be such a sacrifice. The Love of God was seen by the first Christian believers in this giving up of His own beloved Son, to endure the Cross for our sakes. As Paul says: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall

He not also with Him freely give us all things?" and as John: "Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And if we grasp firmly the truth that Christ *was* God's own beloved Son, so dear to Him that, in what He suffered, His Father suffered also, this mode of representation may still suffice. We know what it would cost an earthly father to give up a beloved son to die for others, for those who loved him not, for those who were "enemies"; and we may infer from this what it cost the perfect Love that God is (of which Love the highest love of earthly parent is but a faint reflection), so to give up His Son for our sakes, so to see Him suffer and die. But this way of viewing the Cross is not without its difficulties and dangers. The heaviest part of the suffering would seem to be borne by Christ; He would be the nearest to us, and the most loving; and there would always be the danger that Christ, considered as a person apart from God, would come to be more to us than God, His Father, and might even be considered as in some way interposing between God and man. This has indeed been, to a large degree, the consequence of this popular mode of viewing the Cross in relation to God. In connection with mistaken views of the nature of Christ's sacrifice, Christ has been made to appear as more loving and as doing more for us than God. But, as Dr. Davidson remarks with reference to Messianic prophecy, "Jehovah always remains the Saviour; and if there be any mediatorial personage, it is Jehovah in him, the *Divine* in him, that saves" (art. "Prophecy," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, iv. 122). It is *God* in Christ that sends to us Salvation, or, rather, that comes to us in His Saving Love.

Here we see the importance of realising that *unity* of Christ with God to which the deeper minds of the Church were led, largely by considerations arising from the sacrifice of Christ. The conviction to which they were brought was

that which became formulated in the doctrine of the Person of Christ, viz., that Christ was not merely a man, but the Eternal Son of God, who became man, and who in human form died for our Salvation. The sacrifice of the Cross, therefore, was not that of a man merely, but of God, who in one of the "Persons" of the Godhead had become man. It was in this way that the Cross was related to God. We are not at liberty, however, merely to leap to this view of the Person of Christ. We must ask whether we are able to see the unity of Christ with God in the light of the three earliest Gospels, in which we certainly do not find such a doctrine as the Church adopted formulated. But none the less does the perfect unity of Christ with God appear in these Gospels with the utmost clearness. We shall not here adduce separate items of proof: the impression which the life of Christ as a whole makes upon the mind that sympathetically beholds it, is that of one who ever lived in a fellowship with God close as that of a son with a father, who constantly waited on God, who spoke and acted in obedience to the movement of the Spirit of God within Him, and who had, in consequence, the consciousness of being "the Son" in relation to the Eternal Father, in a sense never claimed by any other man; who also undertook a task never dreamt of by any other man, viz., the Redemption of the world, the reconciliation of sinful man to God. This implied His own sinlessness (which is really freedom from all self-seeking), and a sinless or perfectly holy Humanity is one in complete union with God. God, and not a self separate from God, is the principle of such a life.

The perfect unity of Christ with God is further seen in that which was the dominating thought of His life—the *Kingdom of God*. In His complete devotion to this end He made the thought and end of God in human life completely His own—so completely that He was ready to

sacrifice Himself to the uttermost in its cause. In this we have the entire oneness of a human will with the Divine—that full ethical indwelling of God in man, which is also the ontological.

To Christ, as these Gospels give us insight into His consciousness, God was not far off. While God dwelt outside or above the circle of His consciousness, so that He prayed to Him and trusted in Him, He was also *within* Him by His Holy Spirit. While His human consciousness was perfectly *distinct* from that of God, He was yet wholly one with God in His will, the centre of His personality. While He thought as a man, spake and acted as a man, it was ever in response to the inspiration of the Divine Spirit within Him, so that His acts were not His merely, but those of God through Him. His part as a Son was obedience to that to which God moved Him by His living indwelling Spirit. His acts were the outward expression of what God so moved Him to. He was the Son, whose part it was to express the Father. The Fourth Gospel, in this respect, simply gives expression to what we behold in the Synoptists when we read, “the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner”; “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father”; “The Father abiding in Me doeth His (own) works.” This, we say, is simply the expression of what the life of Christ manifested, and it is true, not as theology merely, but as fact. If we separate Christ absolutely from all other members of the human race, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to see in Him a true human consciousness in union with the Divine; but if we see Him to be that man in whom God realised His Ideal of Humanity as His own Son, in whom through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit He was fully incarnated, it is different. Where a human life is in full ethical unity with God, God is there just as

truly as man. There it can be truly said, "I and My Father are one."

"Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line,
Which is human, which Divine?"

What was *seen* was obedient Sonship, but this was at the same time the expression of the very life of the Father in the Son.

Moreover, the Sonship of which Christ was conscious was something that rose above the merely human. It was a Divine-human Sonship. He felt Himself to be "the Son" in the same sense as God was "the Father." While Christ nowhere in these Gospels claims or suggests a consciousness of pre-existence with God, the Sonship that realised itself in Him in human form was something Divine and eternal, expressing itself in the human. It was originally in God. As expressed or realised in Christ, it was God, in His "Person" of Son, in a human form. The Person of Christ, as it stands before us in these Gospels, is the product of two factors. First, He appears as that man in whom all the previous working of God in the world, through His Spirit, becomes expressed in a human form; in whom God's thought of man, conceived in the image of His own Sonship, becomes incarnated—"the Word made flesh." And, secondly, this true incarnate Son of God stands in an immediate relation to *the Father* through the Holy Spirit that moves within Him, so that, as He yields Himself up to that Spirit, the Incarnation of God in man is being consummated, and the Mind, Love, Will of the Father are being through Him expressed. But, although in Christ this process of Divine Incarnation was perfected, this is not out of harmony with that which God was seeking to realise in man in general, but was its consummation. If God be indeed the Spirit of man's highest life, all that is in man that is true and good is originally in and of God. It is God who is the deepest life of the world. The

very meaning of the creation is God's seeking to realise and express His Divine life in human form, to impart Himself to man; and this, that was the constant Divine aim, was fully realised in Christ. This is the explanation of His consciousness of a Sonship that could be placed alongside the Divine Fatherhood, of His Messianic consciousness in general, and of the work He undertook for man in particular. The Sonship that manifested itself in Him was as truly Divine and Eternal as the Fatherhood of God—it was originally and eternally in God, something that came from God and expressed itself in that human form. It *was* the Fatherhood as it expresses itself in a separate and subordinate form. In no other way could the Divine life be expressed in the world. When it appears in a human or created form, it *must* appear in the form of Sonship towards itself. There is a free human personality separate from God; yet at the root of it—the very spring of it—there is the Divine life in the form of Sonship. Sonship as well as Fatherhood thus belongs to God, and, where the Divine Sonship realises itself in a human form, we have there not only man, but God. In this way, simply on the presupposition that it is a Divine life that is manifesting, expressing, and realising itself in the world, and in the light of our Lord's consciousness of His relation to God as represented in the first three Gospels, we reach that which the ancient Church doctrine sought to express when it said that He who suffered on the Cross was not man merely, but the Eternal Son of God, who, for our Salvation, became incarnate. We reach it, we venture to think, in a higher and truer way. For we reach it without any such seeming separation between the Eternal Son and the Father, as has often made it appear that the sacrifice of Christ was that of the Son *rather* than that of the Father, something offered *to* God the Father, instead of a sacrifice which was as truly that of God as of Christ. In this light

we see the sacrifice of the Cross to be an act, not of man merely, nor of an Eternal Son incarnate as a separate Person from the one only God and Father, but the act of God in that Sonship in which He acts in obedience to His Divine nature, expressing therein His holy, fatherly Love for men, and His desire to save them and to win them for His Kingdom, even at the cost of taking on Himself the sin of His world. But, while the Sonship in God was thus incarnated in Christ and expressed in His life and action, God, as Father, also transcended Christ, moving by His Spirit within Him. Christ, in this aspect, was *a Divine-human person, distinct from God*. Only by keeping this fact in view can we understand His experience in Gethsemane or on the Cross. How, otherwise, can we interpret His earnest pleading with the Father, His cry, or His death? As the doctrine of Christ's Person is commonly formulated, it is impossible to understand any of these things; for God cannot so appeal to God, neither can God die. But if we keep in view the real distinction between God as Father, and Christ in whom the Divine Sonship was incarnated *in human form*, we can understand these otherwise inexplicable experiences, and can see in them the culminating point (if we may so speak) of the Divine suffering in the sacrifice of the Cross—the suffering of the Father as well as that of the incarnate Son—free from Patipassianism.

The fundamental truth for “the Atonement” as well as for the Incarnation is, that God is both *in* the world and transcends the world. He is in the world, above all, as that Holy Love which moves in human hearts to the transcendence of the world and of the flesh, which seeks to make men sons of God in spirit and truth, leading them to devote themselves to God and His Kingdom, and making them willing to sacrifice themselves in order that others may be blessed, and that the Kingdom of God may come

in its power. This is God seeking to incarnate Himself in man; and in Christ this Divine purpose was realised. In Him the Divine Love *immanent* in the world came into full unity with God in His transcendency; in Him God and man were *one*, and through Him in this full unity with the Father the sacrifice of the Cross was made, in order to bring men, as yet under sin, into reconciliation with God. What we see in Christ, culminating in His Cross, is the Divine Holy Love in the finite, meeting and uniting with the Infinite Divine Love and Holiness. We behold the Love of God in man, transcending not only "the flesh," but all that is merely individual, separate, and finite, finding its complete unity with the Love of God in Himself—the immanent Divine returning into full union with the transcendent, and from that unity going forth again to bring all men into it, through such a sacrifice as is the supreme expression of the Holy Love which God is, which Love is also the true and eternal life of man.

When we view the Cross thus in its relation to God, and realise that it was God's Love that lived in Christ; when we see how truly it was *God* who was moving in Christ to this great sacrifice,—we see that those modes of apprehending the Cross that we are most familiar with are but *forms* in which men have sought to express the *human* aspects of that which was in itself the great manifestation of the saving Love of God. We see that it could not possibly be, in any strict or literal sense, a "propitiation" or "satisfaction" to God, since it was from God's own Love the whole proceeded, and since it was God Himself who was, deeper than all that was in the human consciousness of Christ, moving towards it all. We see that the Cross was the crowning expression of that Fatherly Love which has been always seeking to win the heart of man, which found its complete incarnation and expression in Jesus Christ, moved Him to give Himself in this great sacrifice

of Holy Love, and sustained Him in it. We see that, while Jesus thought as a man and conceived the necessity for His death in human forms of thought, what was really being done was that God's Love was in Him giving itself for man's Salvation. It all proceeded from the yearning of the Fatherly heart of God. He was, in that perfect Son, seeking to win for Himself His sinful children by a great sacrifice on their behalf, even the greatest that could be made. It is in the heart of God that the Love that expresses itself in sacrifice eternally dwells, from which the Creation itself proceeds, and from Him alone does it come to form itself in man. The very life of God, as that of Perfect Love, is a life of constant sacrifice. In sacrifice the world is founded; by sacrifice it is developed and perfected. The Cross was the manifestation, in time, of the sacrificial Love that dwells eternally in God; in Christ we behold "the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world." But there must have been a Divine *reason* for the sacrifice of Christ in the form in which it was actually made. That form was rendered necessary by the Holy Love that God is, in view of that which is the only really evil thing in His universe, and the one obstacle to the founding of His Kingdom—from which He also sought to save men—namely, *sin*. In the Cross we have God in Christ coming to sinful men in His Grace, in a way that was consistent with His Holiness, with the Divine moral order which cannot be turned aside, and with His purpose of saving men; in a way that should set forth and impress on the world for all time the terrible evil and the necessary consequences of sin; in a way in which His Love was at one with His Holiness, and His Holiness at one with His Love; in a way, in short, that was consistent with Himself and with His purpose of founding an Eternal Kingdom of Love. If we would express in one sentence what we thus see in the Cross in relation to Forgiveness, we would say

that *it was God in Christ, in that Holy Love which He is, drawing nigh to sinful men in Forgiveness, and coming in such a way as to save them by making them the members of His Kingdom*; as Paul has expressed it, it was "*God in Christ reconciling (atoning) the world unto Himself.*"

When we view the Cross in this light, we can see clearly that in it God was coming, not only in the Grace, but in the *power*, of the Kingdom; that He was here pouring out that Spirit of Holy Love which alone can establish the Kingdom; and that the purpose of the Cross is only fulfilled as that Spirit possesses men's hearts and His Kingdom comes within them. We see that in that Spirit Christ assuredly was, and is, *one with God*; that in that Spirit God comes, and Christ and the Kingdom come, to men. We see in the Cross a new creative act of the Eternal Love (yet one with and in continuity of all the Divine action in the world), in order to raise men above "the flesh" and "the world," to lift them out of nature merely, to bring God's Kingdom on the earth, and to make men His children and the heirs of His Eternal Kingdom of Love.

Through that Cross and in that Christ—the Son of God and the Son of Man, in whom God and man are *one*—God has manifested Himself in a new relation to Humanity: He has taken upon Himself its sorrow and its sin; He has sent forth and declared His Forgiveness; He has entered it, to dwell within it in the fulness of His spiritual Power, as foreshadowed in the promise of the new Covenant. By that Holy Spirit, which comes to us supremely through Christ and His Cross, God is with us as He has come in His forgiving Love, as the Power of the life of His human sons and daughters, as the immanent Spirit of that higher life, as the Power that can uphold us in all our sufferings, make us conquerors over sin and death, through us establish His Kingdom in the world, and give us the inheritance of His perfected and Eternal Kingdom.

CHAPTER VI

THE CROSS AND THE KINGDOM

WE have seen, in what we have had before us, the reason why the Cross was necessary before the Kingdom could come in its power; and, since to bring in the Kingdom of God was the great purpose of Christ (whatever may have been the *form* in which it was represented), we shall dwell on the relation of the Cross to the Kingdom somewhat more fully in this the concluding chapter of this Part. The question, What is the final purpose of God in our life? is one that ought to be more deeply pondered than it often is. For lack of such consideration the future is almost a blank to us, and many seem to think that there is nothing discernible beyond Time and Sense. Christ has made the answer to this great question plain to us: It is *the Eternal Kingdom of God*. As we have already remarked, an Eternal Kingdom or Family of God, in which there is no possibility of sin, and in which all the members are united to each other in that Holy Love that God is, is the only conceivable final purpose of God in His creation. This is so, whether we think of the Creator or of the creature. No other end can have absolute worth to God than to realise His own Divine life in a family of sons and daughters. This only would be worthy of Him as the Father; it is this, indeed, that constitutes Him *the Father*. As God, the absolute *Good*, His purpose in creating must be the realisation of His own life of Love in and for His creation. He is *Perfect Love*; and as this is in its very

nature self-giving, God seeks to impart Himself and to make *others* sharers in the Blessedness that belongs to Him as such Love. So to impart Himself to one or to a few merely, could never suffice Him; it must be to as many as possible. Hence His myriads of worlds, and the eternal never-ceasing process of creation. In His boundless universe there is abundance of room for us all.

Ritschl, who has done so much to restore to its true place in our thought the idea of the Kingdom of God as the final purpose of the creation and the governing conception of the Gospel, shows very clearly that "only through the special attribute of Love is it possible to derive the world from God." "Love is will aiming either at the appropriation of an object or at the enrichment of its existence, because moved by a feeling of its worth." But it is "necessary that the objects which are loved should be of like nature to the subject which loves, namely, persons." It must aim at "the promotion of the other's personal end"; "the will of the lover must take up the other's personal end, and make it part of his own." But it is "clear that neither the indeterminate notion of a cosmos, nor the notion of the natural world, can be conceived as the correlate of this particular aspect of the Divine will; for in them there is nothing akin to God." "We can find an object which corresponds to His nature as Love only in one or many personal beings." Ritschl thinks, however, that we cannot decide, "from the conception of Love itself, whether the forth-bringing of *one* loved person, or the forth-bringing, education, and perfecting of a world of spirits, constitutes the end which, under the conception of Love, must be thought as embraced under the personal end of God"; that it is only "the world as a given fact for us that leads us to the conviction that God's end is a multiplicity of persons akin to Himself" (*Justification and Reconciliation* (E.T.), pp. 276-279). But surely this conclusion follows

from the thought of God as *Perfect Love*. We cannot conceive of such Perfect Love as finding its satisfaction in, or as confining its purpose of self-impartation to, *one* kindred person merely. Such Love is *infinite*, and in its infinite diffusion of itself alone can it find satisfaction.

This Divine purpose seeks to realise itself in each world, through the individual members of each—not, however, as individuals merely, but as bound together in a unity of love, in which God's purpose becomes the purpose and aim of each individual life. God Himself can thus make the purpose and destiny of each individual life His own purpose, and the final end of all His working; and we are at the same time lifted above mere individualism into the unity of a life of Divine Love. Therefore it was Christ's purpose that the Kingdom of God should be sought and, as far as may be, realised on this earth. He has made this plain, not only in several of His parables, but in the prayer which He taught His disciples, in which they are to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," where, it is implied, God's will is perfectly done. But the Kingdom of God can never be perfectly and permanently realised in any sphere of Time and Sense. If such were its only sphere, it could only be realised by a few living in the latter period of each world's history, and for a limited time only. Every material world, as it has had a beginning, must also have an end; and if there were no Eternal sphere, there would be no permanent result of the Creation and no lasting good to the creature. The Kingdom of God must therefore be an Eternal Kingdom, finding its perfect realisation in that sphere to which God Himself as Spirit belongs. And therefore, while Jesus meant the Kingdom to be manifested on the earth, He always taught that its full fruition and perfection were only to be found in the future and Eternal. He sought to make men members of that Kingdom here, in order

that they might be fitted for its inheritance in its perfect and eternal form.

As it is in such a Kingdom alone that we can perceive a worthy purpose of God in the Creation, so it is only in it that man can find any permanent and ultimate good. Everything else is transitory; all that is of man merely and of the world is constantly passing away: the Kingdom of God alone endures for ever. We ourselves are continually passing away from this world as a sphere of good; and if there be no eternal world which we can enter, how can there be any real or ultimate good in our life at all? And if there be no real and ultimate good possible for us, the Creation itself becomes something utterly meaningless—so far at least as we and other finite beings are concerned. And what meaning would it have for God? But an eternal world can only be that perfected Kingdom of God in which God's will is perfectly done, and life for this very reason raised above the temporal and imperfect to the Divine, the perfect, the eternal. It is in such a society alone, in which there is play for all our spiritual faculties, but never any departure from the Divine Law of Love, that perfect blessedness is possible. To be the member of such an Eternal Kingdom does not imply a life of inactivity, or one in which there will be no occasion for the exercise of that self-sacrifice which brings the truest blessedness; for it means to be raised into that same life which is essentially that of God. For those who thus share in the Divine Life there must be, in relation to those not yet members of the Eternal Kingdom and to worlds as yet imperfect, ample opportunities for that highest form of service and blessedness which we behold in God and in Christ in relation to ourselves. Even in this present life, a man never finds a true and satisfying good till he makes his own that which Christ calls him to, and begins to "seek

first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." Then only does he find that which satisfies his whole nature, and a good which nothing can destroy or take away from him. In all conceivable circumstances he can find his blessedness in such devotion to God and His highest will. To many it is chiefly the thought of the Kingdom of God, and the opportunity of devotion to it, that lifts life above the mere "trivial round" and the "vanity of vanities," and makes it worth living. And if we think of the social life instead of that of the individual, it is the Kingdom of God alone that presents an adequate ideal for human society, and sets before men a sure and a certain goal towards which they may move onward. Although the Kingdom must first have its seat in individual hearts, it becomes, as it realises itself therein, the source of all social well-being, and in its ultimate form it is, as we have seen, a social conception. The prevalence of the reign of God in men's hearts alone can inspire us with hope, in view of the social life of men. Just as this Kingdom comes, just as God reigns in His truth, and as the Love that He possesses human hearts and dominates men's lives, just as God's will is accepted and done on the earth, will men in their various aggregations become truly united, and "the good of all become the good of each, and the good of each the good of all." At the same time, it is in this thought of the Kingdom of God and in making this the purpose of his life that the individual comes to his rights, and can regard his life as belonging to the purpose of God. It is only thus (as Ritschl shows very well) that he becomes elevated above the world as the *means* of God's purpose; that he can take all his experiences as ministering to the true *end* of his being and to his true good; that he gains, in a word, "the faith that overcometh the world."

But this Kingdom, being that of God, is essentially a *spiritual* Kingdom. It is the Kingdom of Love, and

therefore force of any kind can never bring it. As the Kingdom of God, its principle is higher than anything that is of man merely. It is the Kingdom of universal Love, and therefore it is opposed to every form of selfishness—so much so, that many refuse to believe that such a Kingdom is practicable or possible. But of course this is really refusal to believe in God. It is the Kingdom of the Spirit, and in it “the flesh” must be transcended: the Kingdom of the Spirit, and therefore the Spirit of God alone can bring it.

Now, as we have seen, what we have in the Cross in its *ultimate* purpose and power is *the sending forth of that Spirit*. It was for this reason that the Kingdom could not come till the Cross had been endured. The old saying is deeply true, that “Christ reigns from His Cross.” It was through the Cross, above every other way, that that Spirit of God went forth to men—the Spirit that alone could make men spiritual, and bring in the Spiritual and Eternal Kingdom. And, for the sending forth of this Spirit, the Cross in its relation to *sin* was necessary. Not merely because sin in some judicial way separated man from God, and had to be atoned for; not merely because man was guilty, and, on account of his guilt, excluded from the Kingdom. No; but because sin in the heart (or in “the flesh”) is a *real* separation of man from God, and because man is *sinful* as well as guilty. Sin is, in its essence, the unloving, the selfish, the un-Godlike—the very opposite of the principle of the Kingdom. As we have seen, sin cannot by any possibility be permitted to enter the Kingdom of God; sin is of necessity doomed to *death*. Sin is the *only* obstacle to the Divine purpose of setting up the Kingdom, the *only* evil thing, the *only* enemy to God and to man, and therefore the evil of sin must be impressively manifested. It is no *light* Spirit that can be the power of the Kingdom of God in men’s hearts—no Spirit which

would treat sin as a small matter ; but only the Spirit of that Holy Love that God is, which, finding entrance to the hearts of men, leads them to die with Christ to "the flesh," and makes them new creatures, living no longer to themselves, but to Him who died for them, and who rose again ; yea, with Christ Himself living in them, and forming their personalities through His Spirit as the true Spirit of their life. From the Cross, viewed in its relation to sin, that Spirit of Holiness and Love proceeds in all its fulness, convicting men of sin, drawing them to God, assuring them of the Divine Love and Forgiveness, and inspiring them with an entirely new and fervent devotion to God and His service, to Christ and His Kingdom.

We know that in this way, after Jesus had died, the Kingdom of God did begin to come, as is witnessed in the Epistles of Christ's Apostles, and by Christian history in general. We know that throughout the Christian centuries, wherever Christ and His Cross have been preached and believed in, individual souls have been born into a new life of the Spirit, which, in spite of many imperfections in its manifestation, has been essentially the life of God's Kingdom. We know that from that moment a new social ideal shone forth on the human horizon, towards which men have felt themselves, often in spite of themselves, drawn onward. We know that, through Christian influences, the world has been in many ways greatly blessed : the dark places have been illumined, giant forms of evil have been dethroned, a new feeling of Humanity has been developed, and the reign of God in some measure established. And if neither in the individual life, nor in relation to society, has the power of the Kingdom been so manifest as we might fairly look for, this has been in large measure the consequence of our failing to perceive, as clearly as we ought to have done, that it was *to bring in the Kingdom of God*—both as an Eternal Kingdom, of which men were to be made the

members, and as a present Kingdom here on the earth—that Jesus Christ died on His Cross. It is in its departure from Christ's grand "Gospel of the Kingdom," and in the setting up in its stead of what is too purely an individual Salvation, that, more than in anything else, the weakness of Evangelicalism lies. But if men would only study the Scriptures, they could not but see that their great theme is *the Kingdom of God*; and if they would read for themselves the Gospels, apart from all implications of human Theology, they could not fail to perceive that the Gospel that Jesus preached was "the Gospel of the Kingdom of God," and that it was to bring in that Kingdom that He died. If, moreover, they would ask themselves what is the Eternal Salvation they hope for, they would become conscious that it is one that can only be found in an Eternal Kingdom of God, which is an Eternal Kingdom of Love, from which sin and all that is unjust, untrue, and unloving, is sternly and necessarily excluded. It is a *Society* the members of which are bound together by Holy Love and devotion to the will and purpose of God. How can those be *fit* to enter such an Eternal Society who have not sought, above all things, to cherish and to exercise the spirit of Love as the spirit of their life, or who, while hoping for Salvation, have never in earnest made the purpose of God their own? What hope of a place in God's Eternal Kingdom can there be for those who have never taken any real interest in His Kingdom in this world? Christ was very much in earnest when He gave Himself for us in order to make us the members of God's Kingdom; and we trust that it needs no apology if we conclude this endeavour to study the Cross as Christ Himself viewed it, with an appeal to the Church to return, more completely than it has yet done, to Christ's own Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Not as something belonging to Time and to this world only; for thereby its real power is lost; but as that which brings the Eternal

into the temporal, making men the spiritual sons and heirs of God and members of one Eternal family. Not as something that is out of harmony with the Gospel preached by Paul and the other Apostles. They all preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, although circumstances led some of them—Paul, for example—to dwell with special fulness on certain particular aspects of it, and on some subjects then of pressing interest, and of enduring importance, in relation to its establishment. But however individualistic Paul's teaching in the first portion of the Epistle to the Romans may seem, and whether we are able to accept the forms of his theology or not, we have only to read to the end of the Epistle to be convinced how truly the Gospel that he preached was the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, as a reality both for this world and for that which is to come.

The forgiving Love of God goes freely forth to all men through the Cross, and Pardon and Salvation may be had by *all* without money and without price. This Gospel of the Grace of God needs to be proclaimed in all its Divine freeness and fulness, so that our faith and hope may be in *God*, and not in any measure in ourselves. It needs to be proclaimed as the Gospel of God's Love and Forgiveness going forth through Christ and His Cross to every soul of man, quite irrespective of merit on man's part. But we need also to remember that it is *in His Kingdom* that God so comes to us, and that we can only make the Divine Forgiveness a reality in our experience, or find the Salvation, as we become the loyal members of God's Kingdom, and make the Divine purpose that of our individual lives. Or, if we prefer to think of *the Father* rather than of the King, it is only as we come home to our Father that the Forgiveness in which He goes forth in Christ seeking us can become our own, in real, personal possession, and it is only as we become the true children of our Father that we find

the Salvation. And, whether we think of the Kingdom and membership in it here and hereafter, or of the Family of God and our place as children therein, we cannot but see that both call us to a life of love and unselfish devotion to the cause of God in the world. We cannot be the members of a Kingdom of God while we live in a self-regarding isolation; and we cannot be the children of God if we are not moved by the spirit of brotherhood in relation to the other members of His great family, whether they have as yet come home to the Father, or are still wandering in the darkness and sorrow of ignorance and sin. We cannot be the members of that Kingdom, to bring in which Christ died, if we do not seek, in the spirit of Jesus, to extend it over all the world, and over life in all its aspects and interests, while at the same time we limit not our thoughts to earth, but seek to be made fit, and to make others fit, for membership in that Eternal Kingdom, in which alone man's permanent good can be found. And we cannot be God's true children, unless, like Jesus, we love all men, unless we seek to bring the wandering and lost home to the Father, and manifest towards all others the self-transcending Love that Jesus manifested, and which alone, as He taught, can make us in truth the children of God. Nor can we be fitted for that Eternal Society of Love, in which is all our hope, unless God's Love *for* us becomes God's Love *in* us, leading us to live in love here and now. If in Christ we see the Kingdom in its perfection, and the true sonship of man revealed, we shall recognise the reasonableness of that which He spake when He said that every man who would be His disciple must take up his own cross and follow Him. The Cross outside of us, while it proclaims Divine Forgiveness, can only *save* us as it becomes the Cross within our own souls, on which we are crucified with Christ. It was through His Cross that Christ brought in the Kingdom in its powerful beginning, in a way that would have been

impossible to any one but Himself; but it is not through *His* Cross alone that the Kingdom must be extended and perfected, but through that of each of His brothers and sisters, to whom the same Love of God has come, and in whom it seeks to live, so making them in truth the sons and heirs of that God who *is* Love. The Cross is the expression of the Love Divine, and the Kingdom of God always comes *through the Cross*. If in this world it seems still but very imperfectly realised, the reason is that we decline that Cross, which would be the supreme proof of our loyalty, the opportunity to render the highest service to God and to man, and the way to win the truest and the only lasting blessedness. "Thy Kingdom come," we pray; but it can never do so till the followers of Christ are moved to take up the Cross in earnest, and by it conquer themselves and the world for God. "*In hoc signo vinces.*"

PART V



THE CROSS IN THE LIGHT OF EVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

I. NEED FOR THE TREATMENT: OBJECTIONS MET: "THE FALL" AND "DEATH"

It is desirable, in order to complete our subject, to ask how the Cross appears when it is viewed in the light of that doctrine of Evolution which necessarily, to such a great degree, dominates all our thinking to-day. For, although there may be no actual demonstration of the truth of that doctrine in any of the forms in which it has been presented, and although many questions may still be unanswered respecting the factors in the process and their relative importance, yet, as Professor Thomson has said (in the *London Quarterly Review* for April 1901, and since then elsewhere), "the general idea of Evolution stands more firmly than ever as a reasonable modal interpretation of Nature"; this "simple, ancient, and fruitful theory is the only scientific theory in the field," and, "since it is applicable to all orders of facts, we must in all our spheres face it and see how it applies."

It is needless to say that the type of Evolution here in view is not that materialistic one which has sometimes been advocated, and with which Evolution has become too greatly associated in the popular mind. It is one in which Mind or Spirit is regarded as deepest and dominant, and continuously manifesting itself in higher and higher forms, be the immediate factors what they may. Evolution is not a *power*, but a *process* in which a truly creative Power is manifested. It is not the Evolution of *nothing*, but of a

Divine idea gradually realising itself in material forms in consequence of its presence as an immanent principle, which finds more and more complete expression. But this immanent principle proceeds from and is one with the transcendent Infinite Spirit, and when *man* is reached with a capacity for the spiritual, he comes into a gradually realised relationship to a Divine spiritual environment which, as he is receptive of it, enters into and completes the process.

As has been well said: "To bring the theory of Evolution into harmony with the Incarnation and the vicarious sufferings of Christ, it must be shown that these doctrines were no special acts of the Divine mind, no new entrance of the Divine Spirit into the world of nature or of man: that they were the outcome of previously existing conditions, working themselves naturally out of God's eternal purposes. That does not imply that God was not in these previously existing conditions; but simply that the Evolutionary process was continuous, uniform, and universal. Evolution stands directly opposed to special creations; it is not inconsistent with rapid growth nor with stages, but these belong to the human side of things. The Divine contact with the world and with man, at all times and throughout all time, is without variableness or shadow of turning."¹ This we accept as a correct statement of what is necessary, but it can only be met by the recognition of that Divine *spiritual* environment in which human Evolution proceeds. In all Evolution the environment is of the highest importance, and the spiritual environment of man is *God*. While there is no *physical* entrance into the process as if from without, the Divine

¹ Dr. A. Gosman, in a review of the first edition of this book in *The Victorian Independent* of February 1903. See also the Writer's *The Spirit and the Incarnation* and *Christian Theism*, etc., where this conception is wrought out.

thought and purpose which underlies and environs the whole process is continuously working itself out, and thus something more of God is ever entering it.

There is the greater need for dealing with this aspect of the subject, because, if the work of Christ was the establishment of the Kingdom of God as the great Divine purpose, and the Cross the chief means thereto, this was really the carrying out of the Divine Evolution in the world to its destined end. We must ask, therefore, How does it agree with, or fit into, the Divine evolutionary process as it had actually worked itself out up to the appearance and work of Christ? Is it in anywise inconsistent therewith; or does it follow in continuity of the Divine working in the world, the method of which may possibly throw fresh light on the Cross?

At the outset we would remark that the idea of Evolution, or gradual development, runs through the whole Bible, so that it is really the great witness to the truth of the doctrine in the moral and spiritual spheres. The Scriptures show us clearly a process of gradual growth in the knowledge of God and of development in moral and spiritual life, culminating in Jesus Christ. They make it perfectly plain, if we read them in the light that modern criticism has caused to shine on their pages, that the coming of the Kingdom of God was the result of a gradual and slow process, in which we behold the Divine Ethical Spirit that was, deepest of all, immanent in the world, working itself out in its manifestation within the sphere of Time, while in another aspect transcendent of the world of Time and Sense. The Old Testament is an even clearer witness to moral and spiritual Evolution than the Book of Nature is to physical Evolution. Jesus, moreover, regarded the coming of the Kingdom from Himself onward, as the result of a gradual growth like that which we see in Nature. It was like "the seed cast upon the earth," which should

"spring up and grow, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." It was like the "grain of mustard seed," and like "the leaven" that was hid in the meal, and wrought on, quietly but surely, "till the whole was leavened." This is certainly *Evolution* in the moral and spiritual sphere. Paul also recognises the principle of gradual advance from the lower to the higher, when he says, "Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. xv. 46). We should expect, therefore, not only to find in the Cross nothing inconsistent with the general Divine method of working, but to see in it the highest expression of the Power that has been all along working and increasingly manifesting itself. If God is the Author of Nature, of man's moral and spiritual nature, and of the onward spiritual movement to which the Old Testament bears witness, we should expect the Christ and His Cross to be in natural continuity with all the Divine working, and none the less supernatural on that account. Let us ask first: *Does Evolution throw any doubt on the reality of Redemption?*

In the opinion of some, it does so. It is sometimes said with great confidence, that since we can no longer regard the narrative of the Fall of man in Genesis as literal history, and since, in particular, we now know that death is not the wages of sin, the doctrine of Redemption falls to the ground. But that opinion rests on the giving of an undue importance to the mere form of the narrative in Genesis, and on an unwarranted reading of that narrative. We now know that that narrative, while it expresses high moral and spiritual truths (which truths were truly the result of Divine revelation), in its details and in its form, simply represents Jewish belief at a certain stage of its history. What Paul believed concerning the narrative of the Fall—whether he took it literally, or, like some Jewish and early Christian Teachers, allegorised it—we cannot say.

But Jesus Christ nowhere refers to it; certainly He did not base His work upon it. Nor does Paul rest on that narrative his doctrine of the universality of sin and need of Redemption, but on the far surer ground of human experience. And if he believed that "not that which is spiritual was first, but that which is natural," or, as he says again, that "the first man Adam became (merely) a living soul," in contrast with the second Adam, who "became a quickening Spirit," he could not have entertained that conception of the primitive state of the first man as created in all the perfection of holiness, which Theology, unfortunately, at a later period adopted. The argument against Redemption from the narrative of the Fall has weight on this last-mentioned assumption only. But there are no adequate grounds for believing that man fell from a high estate of holiness to one of sin and misery. It is clearly impossible to *create* a really holy being. Holiness is something that must be freely *won* by the person—a matter, not of gift or infusion, but of character; and there are few Christians who would to-day contend for the old reading of these narratives in Genesis. But this does not alter in the least degree the *fact* of sin as matter of universal human experience, or make less urgent man's need of Redemption, in the sense of his deliverance from the power of sin and uplifting into the life of the Spirit.

There is more excuse for the difficulty concerning *death* as "the wages of sin." Although Paul looks beyond mere bodily death, he certainly seems to include it under the consequences of sin. Our Lord Himself seems to attribute every form of evil to "Satan" or "the Evil One." But certainly He did not look upon physical death as the supreme evil; on the contrary, it was that which might follow physical death that He regarded as such. He told His disciples not to fear them who could kill the body but could not kill the soul, and nowhere has He spoken of

physical death as the penalty of sin. As already said, the consequence of sin, *i.e.* sinfulness, in Christ's teaching, was exclusion from the Kingdom, the being cast into Gehenna. And when Paul speaks of "death" as the wages of sin, he has in view something far more than death physically regarded: it is death without any resurrection out of it. Physical death comes to all, even to those who have been redeemed from the consequences of sin, to believers and unbelievers alike, and he warns believers to avoid "death" as something affecting the soul or spirit; although all should have to die physically, death, in the sense in which it is "the wages of sin," affects only such as do not live "after the Spirit"; they "shall *die*," with no power of resurrection in them because "the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead" does not dwell in them.

The study of the Evolution of life has shown conclusively that physical death, in itself, is not "the wages of sin." It entered in the service of life, and is something inevitable for all who exist in bodies composed of more than a single cell. It may often seem hard for the individual man to have to die, yet death is indispensable, not only for the well-being of the race, but for its very existence. To the operation of death each one of us owes his presence in the world to-day. And not only our existence, but some of the finest and tenderest qualities of our being. Had there been no death, what a cold and hard world this would have been—

"And a new spirit from that hour came o'er the race of Cain."

Yet this is not all that is to be said. There is something in death that man feels to be out of harmony with the law of his being; he feels that he was not born to die. On the plane of his natural life in the world, death assuredly appears in the guise of an enemy. It brings to an end the life that he enjoys and clings to in spite of all

its sorrows. It separates him from the objects of his affections. It is a stepping into the dark unknown, from which he naturally shrinks back in fear. He cannot tell for certain what comes after it. Conscience is awakened in its presence. If there be a God and a righteous judgment on men's deeds, death seems that which will bring him into the presence of his Judge. "Conscience" thus, in view of death, "makes cowards of us all." Say what we may, man cannot reconcile himself to death—save, of course, in certain exceptional circumstances; and we can never cease to rejoice in Christ as He who has "abolished death, and brought life, even incorruption, to light through His Gospel."

The exclusion of man in "the flesh" from Immortality is the great truth taught in the narrative of Genesis. That narrative is often misunderstood. It shows us, in itself, that death was not then for the first time introduced into the world; its presence is taken for granted, as something well known to our first parents. Otherwise the word "die" would have had no meaning for them; death is supposed to be there as affecting the other creatures, and indeed as being man's natural fate, apart from his continued obedience. The warning—surely it is better to take it as a *warning* than as a penal sentence—"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," did not mean that death was to come to man as something *new*, but as something that should come to him as it came to the other creatures, if he failed to follow the true law of his higher *human* life. It would have a meaning and consequence for him that it did not have for them. It would mean to him exclusion from an immortal life on the earth. This was the solemn significance of death for man as it is given in that remarkable narrative in Genesis.

But there was mercy in this as well as judgment, mercy for man presently involved in "the flesh," but which

should not hold him for ever. There are certain forms of self-indulgence and sin which become so completely embedded in the physical side of our being that only physical death seems to offer any hope of complete deliverance. While death cannot be in itself a Saviour, it may make salvation possible for some of us. There was also in the Divine Creative Thought something much greater than the life of a limited number of immortal beings on the earth—had even this been possible. The Divine Love had in view a far larger family—generation succeeding generation—man ever rising to something higher, till at length he was raised into such a life as should be eternal, because it was the very life of God within him. Eternal Life would seem to be impossible in any material form; “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God”; it cannot be realised in the realm of “the seen and temporal,” but in that of the “unseen and eternal.” It is the life of the Spirit in that spiritual realm which is the boundless sphere and endless scene of the life of God. In what seems dark we thus behold the Wisdom and Love of God shining through the gloom and working out for man a higher, even an Eternal Good. In Christ that Eternal Life was first realised in man in all its fulness, and through the Love that poured itself forth through His Cross of Sacrifice it became the power to raise all who respond to it into the same Eternal Life.

But, in any case, whatever we may believe about physical death, death, in the sense of separation from God, or exclusion from the eternal life of God’s Kingdom, is the necessary and inevitable “wages of sin,” and the only possible fate of sinful man, apart from Redemption. And this is not only in full harmony with the teaching of Evolution, but it is made more comprehensible by that doctrine, which shows us the dependence of life on harmony with its environment, the rejection of “the unfit,” the arrest

of life on a low plane because of failure to advance, and the constant ascent of life to higher and higher forms, under the operation of ever higher and higher laws, which are obeyed or taken advantage of by the ascending organism. If through sin man fails to rise to that higher life, if he fails to "lay hold on Eternal Life"; if, instead of yielding himself up to the Spirit (which is God within him), he chooses to remain under the influence of the lower nature of "the flesh," then, whatever future existence may be his, and whatever hope may be hidden therein, it is in accordance with all that Evolution suggests, to see him left in that "death" which is the opposite of Eternal Life. *This*, and not physical death, is the death that is the wages of sin, from which God in Christ seeks to save men.

CHAPTER II

2. A NEW CREATIVE EPOCH: SIN AND GRACE: "THE FLESH" AND "THE SPIRIT": THE CROSS IN THE SEQUENCE OF THE MORAL ORDER

IN seeking to show further the conformity of the Cross with the doctrine of Evolution and the light that is thus cast on it, we would point out—

1. That the Cross, in its Biblical presentation, appears as marking *a new stage in the life of Humanity*. The doctrine of Evolution enables us to see, in all things, the gradual working out of a great process advancing from stage to stage, led surely on by the action of an immanent Power expressing itself mainly through the envioning forces, which forces are but other aspects of the same Power. It has familiarised us with the conception of successive epochs in the manifestation of that Power, and in the consequent advance in development. We see such epochs marked in the first appearance of life, of consciousness, of man as man, rising up out of Nature into freedom, with a dawning consciousness of moral law—although doubtless these epochs were in each case only gradually approached. So the Bible shows us, in the selection, education, and development of one special race, a steady advance towards a yet higher epoch or manifestation of life, towards which we now witness not merely physical but spiritual influences contributing. Lifted gradually out of the surrounding Polytheism to the conception of one

sole moral Deity and His Law over them, we see them gradually disciplined and led onward, till, after the Law had done its work, seconded by other more painful agencies, it became possible for them to be raised into the higher life of the Spirit and of ethical sonship towards God. As Paul teaches, the "natural" is succeeded by the "spiritual," the "living soul" (which is the description applied in the Scriptures to all animal life), by the Spiritual man, who appears in his full development in Christ as a "second Adam—a quickening Spirit"—the Head of a new and higher Humanity, and the supreme source to it of the fulness of that new spiritual life which transcends the flesh. The principle of man's natural life is the same as that of all animal life—the self-seeking, self-preservative principle; whereas the principle of the Divine life, into sonship towards which man was to be raised, is the self-giving, self-sacrificing principle of Love. Man "after the flesh," therefore, *could not* be the true son of God; "they that are after the flesh cannot please God"; "that which is (born) of the flesh is flesh, and that which is (born) of the Spirit is spirit." The Law had certainly a spiritual aim and element, but for that very reason man could not fulfil its spiritual requirements; for, as Paul says, "the Law is spiritual, but *I* am carnal," after the flesh. It was only through the action of God's Spirit upon him that man could be freed from, or raised above, the power of "the flesh." And that Divine Spirit, having expressed itself in its fulness in Jesus Christ as the result of all its previous working in the world, came, as the power of that new and higher life, to all men through His Cross. Christ was not the product of "Evolution," but the Divine Spiritual working reached its goal in Him, and through His Cross the Spirit went forth in that fulness of power which was able to *reverse* the action of sin in the flesh, so, redeeming men from sin, and raising them into the higher life of the sons

and heirs of God. There, as represented by Jesus Christ, man, in the flesh merely, *died*, and a new man rose up in full power of the higher spiritual and eternal life of the sons of God. Just as at first, through a Divine act of self-sacrifice or self-giving, God became the immanent principle of the world's life (to which fact was due all its subsequent Evolution), so now, by a new act of self-sacrifice or self-giving, led up to by all that went before, He became the immanent principle of a new and higher life and Evolution. As, in relation to previous epochs, there had been a progressive movement on towards that which was at length realised, so was it in relation to the new epoch inaugurated by the Cross. There had been a long progress towards spirituality, which had been approached in varying degrees of nearness in preceding generations. Sometimes there had been periods of at least *seeming* decadence and retrograde movement, but these were always followed by fresh advance (like the incoming waves that alternately advance and recede, yet make real progress), till at length "in the fulness of the time" God's Son appeared, by His Cross ending the old Humanity and introducing the new. It was a higher stage in the life of Humanity, and a new Creative Epoch in the same sense (although on a higher plane), as those which we witness in the manifestation of life and in the uprise of *man* above the mere animal.

2. As we have sought to show at length elsewhere (see *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, Pt. iii.), the doctrine of Evolution enables us to apprehend the real organic unity of Christ with Humanity and that true Headship of the race that is implied in the Biblical conception of His work. The Incarnation, so viewed, is seen to be the result, not of a new Divine act as if from without, but the outcome of all God's previous working in Nature and in man by His Spirit. We thus see Christ arising out of our Humanity

as its natural Head, while none the less coming from God, the manifestation of God in man, and the medium of a new and fuller entrance of God into the world. Redemption comes thus into line with creation, while its object was none the less the salvation of man from the sin that was marring his life and threatening to rob him of the destiny which God intended for him.

3. Man's position under "the flesh," along with the necessities of his development, suggest, also, *a reason why God should have* (in Paul's phrase) "*passed over sin*," and why He should have proclaimed such an amnesty as He did through Christ, or manifested Himself in Forgiveness, yea, why He should have taken on Himself the sin of the world. No doubt it was His Love that moved Him to this; but God's Love can never act nor exist in separation from His Reason and Righteousness. If God, in His Love, freely forgave transgression, if He drew nigh to the world of sinful men, "not imputing their trespasses unto them," and if, in connection with this, He made that impressive manifestation of His Holiness and of the evil of sin to which the Cross bears witness, there must have been some Divine *reason* for His action. It could not have proceeded from *mere* Love, for such "mere Love" does not exist in God. The doctrine of Evolution suggests the wherefore, and thus helps us to see the *reasonableness* of the Cross.

In a suggestive treatment of "Redemption" by Mr. R. J. Campbell (then of Brighton), it is said that in the Cross we see "the Eternal Son of God—that side of the Divine nature which has gone forth in creation"—taking "responsibility for that experience of evil into which humanity is born, and the yielding to which constitutes sin" (*A Faith for To-day*, pp. 272, 273). This and other similar statements have been severely criticised, where they have not been summarily rejected. Nevertheless, there is a

great truth here suggested, although we must be extremely careful in its statement. It is not said nor suggested that God in Christ took upon Himself responsibility for human *sin*. Yet it is said that there is a necessary "evil bias," without which "holiness would be impossible," and that for that evil bias the Eternal Son becomes responsible (p. 272). To think that God in any way makes Himself responsible for *sin*, would be sadly to misinterpret the Cross, and this was, doubtless, far from the thought of the writer referred to; but to say that He makes Himself responsible for an evil bias, "without which neither guilt nor sainthood could have come into being," comes perilously near to it. God never creates evil, nor can He make Himself responsible for it in any form; for evil (in the moral sense) is always that which is foreign to God and opposed to His will. It is just this that makes it *evil*. It is quite a mistake to speak of "an evil bias" for which God is responsible—a mistake from which the doctrine of the gradual Evolution of man from a lower to a higher condition ought to save us. To say that the "primordial evil" had its origin with God (p. 272), is wholly unwarranted. No doubt, without the *possibility* of evil, that of goodness can have no existence; and it may be that, without the actuality of evil emerging in human experience, the higher forms of good could not have been realised by man.¹ But we need not speculate on the question whether the moral and spiritual nature of man could have been developed without the experience of evil. We must take the world as we find it, and look on man according to our knowledge of the actual course of his development. It must be remembered that, in the light of Evolution, we do not start with a freshly created being, and that the question is not that of the possibility of such a being pursuing his course of development free from

¹ For a strong statement of this, *vide* Mr. Fiske's *Through Nature to God*.

sin. What we have really to do with is, not so much, as the old divines conceived it, a case of man's *departure* from God, as one of his failure to rise to God and to the life to which he was Divinely called. Man has already begun his life on a lower stage than that to which he is to be raised; he has started with a lower animal nature, adapted to his original conditions of life. The higher Good shines before a being who has an animal nature which he has been accustomed to follow, and in this very fact there is present in him a *bias* which, while not *evil* in itself, becomes such, and necessitates a conflict in relation to the higher moral and spiritual Good. It will be long before this last becomes actually *his* Good. Between certain elements in the lower nature—between its general bent and central principle, indeed—and the higher life to which he is called, there will be such antagonism as, freedom of choice being granted, will eventuate in sin. But the sin is always the result of man's own choice; and what God is responsible for is, not the sin or the evil, but a world in which evil should inevitably, as a matter of fact, appear, and for creatures whom He foreknew should fall under sin. The nature that was developed in man had no "evil bias," it was simply an animal nature with that self-centred principle which was necessary for the existence of animal life, without which it could not find footing nor persist on the earth. It only becomes evil when man follows it, instead of rising above it to the higher life to which he is called. For an animal, there is nothing *evil* in the life of the flesh; no more was there anything evil in it for the animal man, as such; but it became evil when man, called to a higher life, chose to follow the lower principle. It is that *choice* that constitutes *sin*. No doubt, as Paul says, man makes this choice, and follows sin, through the *strength* of the flesh, as the older and more deeply rooted principle in him; but his making that choice was contrary to the will of God,

and contrary to what was *possible* to him. It was contrary to that which was the highest law of life for him as a creature—contrary to his higher ideal or nature. From the very first dawn of life there has been a progressive movement from the material towards the spiritual, from the bodily towards the mental, from the self-centred towards the self-giving, from the life of self towards that of love. There has been ever “a pathway of life,” along which the life that would persist and improve, and by conformity to its ever-increasing environment, rise, must travel. This is shown very clearly by Professor Tyler, in his *Morse Lectures*, on the “Whence and Whither of Man.” When brain has been formed, there is a conscious knowledge of the pathway given. Then, “the very highest that the intellect can perceive is bound to become the controlling motive of the will. It has always been so. It must be so, if Evolution is not to be purely degeneration” (p. 143). Evolution has not, by any means, become purely degeneration. Man, by obedience to this law of all progressive life, has developed highly; and yet, is it not a sad fact that, in relation to his highest spiritual environment and to the call that comes to him therefrom (even where it is clearly enough perceived by the intellect), man is disobedient, turning away from instead of following “the pathway of life” that has been caused to shine before him? It is this that makes sin such a strange thing, such an anomaly in the world, such a contradiction to the course that life has followed up to this point; and, while the consequence has not been degeneration in regard to man’s life as an individual in its earthly aspects, there has been a relative degeneration in relation to the highest life, as compared with what might have been, had “the pathway of life” been faithfully followed. The pathway of the highest life having been thus refused, while life continues in its lower elements, and even makes advance in relation to its external

environment, there must be, in relation to the higher life, not only privation and imperfection, but a measure of positive degeneration, such as the Scriptures assume to exist, and the end of which is the death that is the consequence of sin. "The flesh," being continuously yielded to and followed instead of the higher principle which should have ruled, gains an undue ascendancy, and thus renders man's condition an abnormal one; and unless he can be lifted out of it, the Divine purpose in his creation cannot be realised.

There has thus been a real "Fall," although we cannot locate it in space nor assign it to some definite moment of time. It was in the refusal of the higher law, or in the lower choice, that *sin* made its appearance in the world. It did not need to "come in" from anywhere. Its *possibility* was there in that animal nature in which man stood rooted. His yielding to this, instead of following the higher law that shone upon him, was the "Fall of man." It is a fallacy to say, as some do, that when man fell he "fell upwards"—a fallacy which is, often unconsciously, based on the old and discredited view of man as standing originally in pure innocence. It was a real "Fall" in relation to the higher moral and spiritual life that called him, and it has placed him at a great disadvantage in relation to the higher life. It has brought him into that subjection to "sin" which has characterised the race, although individual members of it have, under spiritual influences, not only struggled against sin, but have in large measure risen above it.¹

¹ Dr. Newman Smyth, in his *Through Science to Faith*, deals with "the Fall" as a case of *Retrogression*. "The most awful doctrine of the possibility of fall is opened by an evolutionary philosophy. It is possibility of fall down the whole ascent of life. There may be fearful descent from nature's spiritual height. The degeneracy of man may be moral as well as physical; for at the height of Evolution, where man stands, and from which he may fall, a self-responsible life has been

Yet, while the sin is man's, it was a foregone conclusion that the great mass of men should so fall into sin; and this could not have been unforeseen by God, nor left unprovided for in the Eternal counsels. So far as can be seen, there was no other way by which man could be educated, developed, and raised to his highest manhood, save that way which was actually marked out for him, namely, beginning with a nature which had in it the bias of "the flesh" or of the animal life, and being gradually raised above it to the life of the Spirit. And, while sin was not a *necessity*, nor God in any way responsible for it, or for any "evil bias" in man, He was, with deepest reverence be it said, responsible for the creation of a world into which sin was certain to enter, and for the general experience through which man should pass. At the very least, He was responsible for a world in which He foresaw that sin should arise, with all its consequent misery. Paul does not hesitate to say, but rather glories in the fact, that God foresaw it all, and in His Eternal counsels made provision to meet it, that "where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound." But there was a *reason* for that Grace; and that reason was the weakness of man, the practical inevitableness of sin, so long as man was not delivered from the fleshly principle by the influence of a higher Power, which could only be *gradually* brought to bear upon him. In the history of Israel, in particular, we see the working and gradual advance of this higher power of the Spirit, till it culminates in Jesus Christ and His Cross. The Cross declares that God has never left His world; that He does not shrink from responsibility for the actual world that He has created; that He will, at any cost to Himself,

gained." Yet, while it is a fall downwards, it is not a fall *out of* Evolution. The one Divine movement, which gave scope for human freedom, carries man's fall on to its triumph of creative and redeeming love (pp. 201-203).

redeem it from sin, and raise man to the life He eternally designed for him as His child. What we see in the Cross, viewed in this light, is God in Christ taking upon Himself the responsibility for His world, yea, taking upon Himself the sin which had entered it, in order to take it away—showing at once His utter antagonism to sin, His compassion for sinners, and His determination, even by the greatest act of self-sacrifice, to save them. While, as we have said, God is not the author of evil and could not make Himself responsible for that in any form, yet He is the author of that world of which evil has become a constituent, and, while sin is sin and utterly opposed to God, man's involvement in the flesh so laid him open to sin that he becomes the fit object of the Divine compassion, even to that otherwise incredible degree to which the Cross bears witness. God there actually takes upon Himself that sin of His creatures, in which, while they were personally guilty, they had become involved in their way towards the Good that He had in view for them when He created His world. It is the doctrine of Evolution that enables us to see this great truth, and if we realise it, it will give the Cross a new power over both our reason and our heart, such as sometimes seems to be needed at the present time. It will lead us to exclaim, with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!" And it will enable us to see that the Cross was not the result of any after-thought, but part of the working out of one great Divine counsel of wisdom and of Love, that "as sin reigned in death, even so might Grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

4. In order to see the harmony of the Cross with the Divine method of working as shown in Evolution, we must

see the Cross coming to Christ, not as an arbitrary or external appointment, but in the natural sequence or working out of the Divine moral order. We must see the burden of men's sin falling on Him, not as on One who comes in, as from without, to take up the load, but as on One who, because of His relation to His human brethren, "bears their iniquities." We must see the consequences of sin that lighted on Him and which were also the punishment of man's sin (although not punishment to Christ personally) to be the result of the increasing sinfulness of men, according to the Divine method of punishing sin by increasing sinfulness, till it reaches its climax in the rejection and Crucifixion—the destruction, as far as that was possible to man—of Him who represented man in his truth before God. Evolution demands that we see everything following in a natural sequence, and this is what we witness, whether we contemplate the Cross on its God-ward or on its man-ward side. As we shall see in the next chapter, there has been a gradual advance in the manifestation of sacrificial Love. And there has also been, as Paul shows in the first chapter of Romans, an increasing degeneration of the humanity that departed from the life which God meant for man—an Evolution of Evil, may we not say?—or of the power of the lower nature in its divorce from the higher, till it reached its lowest depth in the Crucifixion of the Best of the race—the Son of Man who was also the Son of God. In the Cross of Christ we see both lines manifested and meeting: the Evil in its culmination arrayed in destroying force against the Good—the flesh against the Spirit—and the Good, in the perfection of self-sacrificing Love, letting the Evil work its worst upon it and so overcoming it that the Good becomes a Spiritual Power in the world destined to triumph wholly over the Evil.

CHAPTER III

SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE: THE NEW POWER NEEDED: THE COMPLETION OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

1. THE history of the Evolution of the world and of man shows us what seems at first sight a strange and saddening fact, namely, that it has been through *suffering* and through *sacrifice* that the greatest advances have been made. The inheritance that we rejoice in to-day has been won, in the main, through the suffering of many. The very foundations of the world's life are laid in sacrifice. At what a cost of suffering and of sacrifice were the great civilisations of the past upreared, and through what incalculable travail and sorrow have the generations of men moved onward to where we find ourselves to-day! And still it continues. How can we understand all this suffering? How can we rejoice in a life that has been born of it? The Cross alone throws light upon it, showing that suffering and sacrifice for the sake of others belong to the very life of God, and that it is only through these that He can impart Himself to the world. God has not been absent from all that suffering. He has been in the midst of it; it has been the manifestation of something that belongs to His nature of Love; it has been really a Divine life that has been, deepest of all, in the suffering world, and, through that perpetual sacrifice which the Cross declares and crowns, imparting itself to man. And although we cannot speak with certainty concerning the suffering of the lower creatures by which they have all ministered to man, yet, in

the light of the fact which Evolution reveals, that it is *one* life that moves in all, we are sure that even *it* has not been wholly separate from God, and that in some way it shall yet be seen not to have been in vain for any creature. *How*, we cannot tell; but in the Cross we see, as it were, all the suffering of the world gathered up into God Himself, and so consecrated unto the highest and holiest uses. We feel sure that, in the hands of Him who Himself makes that great sacrifice, all shall yet be well.

Much of the suffering and sacrifice to which the history of the world bears witness has been unconscious of itself as therein rendering any service. But the story of Evolution shows us that, from a very early period, that highest form of Love, which expresses itself in *conscious self-sacrifice*, began to manifest itself as the most potent factor in the development of Humanity. There is no more entrancing story than that which is outlined by Mr. Fiske, in his *Through Nature to God*, of the marvellous influence of *maternity* in human development—how, from the Evolution of Motherhood and the new *personal* relationships thus first entered on, man has been gradually raised into his manhood; and how, “from lowly beginnings, without breach of continuity, and through the cumulative action of minute and inconspicuous causes, the resistless momentum of cosmic events” has wrought on towards “the Evolution of the sentiments which tend to subordinate mere egoism to unselfish and moral ends” (pp. 128, 129). We are led thus to see the “cosmic roots” of Love and self-sacrifice, and if we follow the story of man’s development, we shall see that it has always been through the suffering of Love in self-sacrifice that the greatest advances have been won. It is this fact that gives its supreme pathos to human history. It is the principle here at work that gives us the noblest type of saints and martyrs, and of those “servants of God” who take on themselves and bear the sins of the

guilty nation. From devotion to the infant, the family, the tribe, the feeling has grown to Love for mankind itself, and, from regard to the present interest of the individual child, family, tribe, and nation, it has risen to regard for the highest and invisible things of truth and Righteousness, yea for the things, not of man merely or of this present world, but of God and His Eternal Kingdom.¹ While all have been involved, more or less, in sin, and while the mass of mankind have seemed hopelessly so involved, the world has never been without such devoted souls.

“Up from undated time they come,
The martyr-souls of heathendom,
And to His Cross and Passion bring
Their fellowship of suffering.”

In the Cross of Christ we behold the supreme manifestation of this uplifting Love and self-sacrifice, and from it we learn the Divine source of that Love which has striven, amidst much that seems dark and cruel, by the giving of itself, to sweeten life, to transform selfishness into altruism, to redeem and uplift Humanity. The Cross thus stands, not alone, but is the supreme example and revelation of the Eternal Love which from the first has suffered with and for the world; it is, in this aspect, simply the highest expression of that Love, and we may well say with the gentle-hearted poet—

“Good cause it is for thankfulness
That the world-blessing of His life
With the long past is not at strife;
That the great marvel of His death
To the one order witnesseth,

¹ The gradual advance of man in the knowledge and practice of the great Law of Sacrifice, up to that of Christ Himself, as pouring out for others the life He had won, is set forth with clearness and beauty in a Lecture by Mrs. Annie Besant, published by The Theosophical Publishing Society of London, although she stops short of the Christian conception of the Cross in relation to sin.

No doubt of changeless goodness makes,
 No link of cause and sequence breaks,
 But, one with nature, rooted is
 In the eternal verities."

WHITTIER'S *Miriam*.

2. Again, the history of man's Evolution shows us the need there was for such a *manifestation of the evil of sin* as was given in the Cross. The exhibition and experience of the evil consequences of wrong-doing and of sin were, all along, potent influences in the education of Humanity, leading men to a perception of the evil nature of sin, and so tending to save them from it. As Mr. Fiske says, "it is only after long ages of social discipline, fraught with cruel affliction and grinding misery, that the moral law becomes dominant, and religious aspiration intense and abiding in the soul" (*Through Nature to God*, p. 53). What a testimony we have here to the need for the Cross! Again, we are told that the idea of Evolution requires that evil should be *evanescent*. "After the nature of that which the upward-striving soul abhors has been for ever impressed upon it, amid the long vicissitudes of its pilgrimage through the dark realms of sin and expiation, it is at length equipped for its final sojourn,

'In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love'" (p. 55).

What could so impress men with a sense of the terrible evil and utter hatefulness of sin, as to behold on the Cross God Himself in human form suffering at the hands of sinful men, and taking on Himself the suffering that is caused by sin, in order to secure the high purpose of His Fatherly Love in man's creation! Surely, if anything could create in the souls of men that sense of the evil of sin which is said to be required for their moral and spiritual perfecting, it would be that Cross on which God as man suffered because of man's sin, and for his salvation. As a matter

of fact nothing has been so influential in creating an abhorrence of sin.

3. Finally, and as covering the whole field, we see how truly the Cross comes in the line of Evolution *as the power which continues and completes the process*—the process of uplifting men above the life of the flesh into the life of Love, the life of God's Kingdom, the eternal life of the sons of God. The goal of the evolutionary process, Mr. Herbert Spencer teaches, is to be found in what we may describe as a balanced altruism, in which selfishness is subdued by regard for others. From the beginning, along lines physical, physiological, psychological, sociological, and ethical, everything has been slowly moving on towards this; and he looks forward to the time when "the highest altruism" shall be all-prevailing,—“for that which the best human nature is capable of is within the reach of human nature at large,”—and “a rationalised version” of the ethical principles of Christianity (the religion of Love) “will eventually be acted upon” (*Data of Ethics* (1894), pp. 256, 257). What is this but a testimony (so far unconscious, perhaps) to the fact that the idea of the Kingdom of God's Love is the deepest and governing power of Evolution? The whole course of Evolution, Mr. Fiske assures us, bears witness to an “omnipresent ethical trend,” whereby man is being slowly lifted “from an animal life of selfishness into an ethical life of Love in the image of God” (*Through Nature to God*, “The Cosmic Roots of Love and Self-Sacrifice”). With great wealth of illustration, Mr. Alexander Sutherland, in *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*, has traced the steady growth of *sympathy* “with absolutely unbroken continuity, through the lowliest savage to the noblest of men, always as a biologic process,” and without making “the least attempt to correlate it with any possible scheme of the universe” (vol. i. p. 1). And he ventures

to look forward to the time when sympathy shall be supreme. "For still at work, though invisible, unless we carefully look for them, are those natural influences which from generation to generation are culling out the unsympathetic elements, and giving the earth to be possessed by the more sympathetic" (vol. i. p. 461). What does all this show but that the goal of the Divine Power, as it works in Nature and by "natural laws," is that Kingdom of God which Christ gave Himself to establish?

His work is in strict keeping with, and in continuation of, the Laws that have been working in Nature. In their very foundation, the altruistic feelings and functions are those directed towards the reproduction and maintenance of the species, and as they work themselves out they take ever upon them a higher and higher character: "Love for offspring broadens out into love of kind" (Geddes and Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex*, pp. 280, 281). What was the Love that manifested itself in the Cross directed to but the Salvation and maintenance of "the kind," of *the race* in its true life as conceived by God? We thus see the foundation of that which is destined to issue in the Kingdom of God laid in the very lowliest forms of life. Or, if we think of the development of *social* life, we shall see a like correspondence and continuation. "The Evolution of society, no less than the Evolution of life," says Mr. Fiske, "conforms to that universal law of Evolution discovered by Mr. Spencer"; and "social progress consists primarily in the integration of small and simple communities into larger communities that are of higher and higher orders of composition; and in more and more complete subordination of the psychical forces which tend to maintain isolation, to the psychical forces which tend to maintain aggregation. In these respects, the prime features of social progress are the prime features of Evolution in general" (*Cosmic Philosophy*, ii. 209). It is surely quite manifest that it is in the

Kingdom of God that we have the highest form of this social aggregation, not in a transitory, but in an abiding, form—that in which the interest of the individual is truly *one* with the interest of the whole.

We are led thus, moreover, to see clearly that the real source of *sin* lies in that animal nature which is necessarily earliest, and therefore strongest, in man. Apart from the animal principle of self-seeking and self-preservation, man could never have obtained a footing, or even have existed, on the earth. To him in his earliest state it was not sinful but natural and right, to act from that self-centred principle. It was only when he became conscious that a higher moral law claimed him to the sacrifice of self-interest for the sake of others, or in view of higher moral and spiritual good, and when he obeyed the lower principle instead of the higher, that such action became sinful. It was in this way, as we have seen, that sin became manifest; and the ethical process becomes henceforth that of redemption from this power of sin through the self, and of uplifting into the life of perfect Love. The Cross, as we have seen, shows us also the meaning of "death" as the doom of sin. It was no harsh or arbitrary sentence passed on man. It is not the doom of *man*, but of *sin*, and only becomes that of man because of his self-identification with "sin in the flesh." In the nature of things, sin must die, and man "in sinful flesh" must die to the flesh if he is to rise into the eternal life of the Spirit. And on the Cross we see man, still standing in the flesh, but possessing the full power of the life of the Spirit, dying utterly to "the flesh," and rising up into the fulness of the higher life of the Spirit. It is really a case of the "survival of the fittest." The fittest are always those who are the most truly adapted to their environment. But man's environment is not earthly only, but also spiritual and Divine. When the environment becomes a spiritual one, there is before man a life which can only

find itself in its truth in harmony with God Himself. Man in the flesh merely is unfit for such a life. He must die to the flesh, that he may live to the Spirit. To raise man out of the life of the flesh into that of the Spirit was the aim of all the Divine working in the world, and in Jesus Christ this was manifested as perfectly accomplished. In Him man both died and rose again into a higher life, and for ever liveth unto God. Humanity in Him had reached its destined fitness for eternal life; in Him it had become wholly conformed to its spiritual environment and one with God. This is why His Resurrection stands alone as a unique fact. When it is asked, Why should Christ only, of all men, have entirely surmounted death? the answer is, that in Him only was the required "*fitness*" reached. But from His Cross proceeds the spiritual power that can make others sharers in that fitness. United to Him by faith, they are united to His life, His Spirit becomes the deepest principle of their life, and shall yet conform them wholly to His likeness.

The Spirit of Christ thus becomes that new Divine immanency that will work on till the world be redeemed and the Evolution of Humanity reach its consummation. Through the Cross, the Divine Spirit has entered the world in a higher form than it did at the first creation, and has become the power of a new spiritual and eternal Evolution of man. It is the same power as has been working in the world from the first, and the ultimate purpose has for ever been the same. There is no break in the continuity; but it has, through the Cross, entered the world with a new redemptive fulness such as can deliver men from sin, and raise them above the power of the flesh into the fulness of the eternal life of the Spirit. That Spirit of God and of Christ proves itself to be the supreme power in the world to-day. Wherever it is made known it is acknowledged to be such, however little it may be obeyed. Everywhere

it is working, often unconsciously to those in whom it works, and its fruit is to be seen in the increasing humanity, sympathy, and self-sacrifice that show themselves in the general life of the world. Evolution is a slow process, but it is a sure one; the spiritual potency is at work and we see the evidences of its working on every hand. We see its power manifested in the greatest and most immediate fulness in those who really believe, and who consciously and deliberately accept Christ through His Spirit to live in them and work through them. But it is also working in the whole wide world, spiritualising and uplifting Humanity, and it shall yet make the world what it was destined to be—the Kingdom of God.

As we look back on the past, we witness much which, viewed from the outside, as *we* can only view it, seems extremely trying and confusing—much purposeless suffering, as it may appear to us; and we seem to see the same aimlessness and confusion in much of the life that is in the world to-day. Yet there has been *progress*, and, as has been well said, if we limit our view at present to historic time, we shall see that “the line of this world’s progress has been a development of self-sacrifice.” In any other line we shall fail to prove that there has been an advance from the old to the new. At the root of all that can be regarded as real progress “is the principle of altruism—the inability of the individual to live for his own interest.” Man is carried perforce, as it were, along that line. “The world is not suited for the satisfaction of man—either his physical or mental satisfaction. It curbs and narrows his intellectual life at every corner, because it is made for another life than the individual. It breaks the unity of the family. It interrupts the peace of the tribe, because it desires men to see beyond the tribe. It destroys the boundaries of the nation, because it would stimulate man to a wider altruism than even the life of the patriot—an

altruism which shall seek elements foreign to itself, and find a place in its heart for every country and kindred and people and tongue" (Dr. George Matheson, in *Expositor*, 5th Series, v. 420-424). The same may be said of the world in its relation to man's spiritual and eternal life. He can find no permanent rest or complete satisfaction in the things of Time and Sense. They are changing ever and passing away from him, just because he is meant to find his true life in higher, better, and more enduring realities. And when he rises to those "things unseen and eternal," he at the same time finds the real and abiding good of the things "seen and temporal"; and the Kingdom of God is advanced in the world.

It is manifest that, if man's ideal was to become a son of God, if he was meant to live that life of self-giving love that is the life of God in man, and the life everlasting instead of that life of the flesh which is the merely animal, unsatisfying, and perishing life, *some power must operate* to uplift him into that life in its fulness. Natural causes have operated so far; maternity and family relationships have freed man from utter selfishness; regard for the well-being of the tribe or the nation, or of personal friends, has raised him still higher and widened his life; regard for Humanity itself may even be reached by a few members of the race, and thus the affections become world-wide in their scope. But there is something still higher and wider—regard for God and His Kingdom, and for men as the children of God: there is the universal Love, the Love of all that is Holy and Pure and Good, for its own sake, as the supreme object of the life; and we repeat, there must be some adequate power brought to bear on man to raise him into this highest life. Must not God be revealed so as to win man for Himself and for this life of universal Love? If, as we are assured, the most potent influence in man's early Evolution was that of the *personal* relation of Love in Motherhood,

will there not need to be a personal relation of the *Divine Fatherhood* brought to bear on man to lift him into the life of a son of God?

Man's true ideal is the Life of Love—a life raised above selfishness and self-interest merely—a life transfused with the universal and infinite Love Divine that is behind the whole of the great world-process. We all know, only too well, that egoism, self-love, self-interest still reign, and that merely earthly considerations still too greatly limit man's horizon. But nothing has so softened men's hearts, so mitigated their selfishness, so lifted them out of egoism, so expanded their outlook, opening up to it the unseen and eternal, and revealing the infinite Love of God, as has the Cross of Christ, with the Holy Spirit of Love that proceeds therefrom. It is only as the fire of the Love Divine that burns there kindles an answering flame in the human heart, that man can be entirely lifted out of himself into the Divine life of Love for which he was created. He has reached a high manhood after the flesh, but there is a higher manhood after the Spirit before him; he is a son of man, as a dweller on the earth, but he is destined yet to become a son of God and a true brother to all his fellow-men. Society shall yet be transformed into the Kingdom or Family of God—that which alone can realise the Divine idea and be worthy of perpetuation in the realm of the unseen and eternal. This is the further Evolution of Humanity in this world, and the power that can carry it forward to its consummation was manifested in Jesus Christ, the God-man, and radiated forth from His Cross of Sacrifice. There, God in human form—God as man—gave Himself for us, and gave Himself to the world to become the power of its true and eternal life. By that death on the Cross, God in Christ entered our life, to become the Divine power of its Redemption and perfecting. Real progress in time and advance towards the eternal can

only henceforth be made under the influence and leading of the Spirit of Christ. The goal of Evolution now is not the physical, or even the psychical, man, but the spiritual man, as the heir of an Eternal Kingdom of God; which means man in the unity of Love with God and with all his brethren. Were it possible for us to turn permanently away from the Cross in this its Divine significance, the same consequences would ensue as would have followed had not Love in Christ by its self-sacrifice triumphed over man's sin on Calvary. There would ensue the decadence of our Humanity in all its higher powers and the failure of the Divine purpose in the world. A real degeneration would set in, such as has been manifested in the case of all races that have not followed the highest law of life. But it is not possible thus to get away from the Cross, for it has so entered our life that it shall never leave it again. It has entered it as the power of a higher Divine life, and, thanks be to God, it would be just as possible to root out of the world the power of the life of Nature as it would be to get permanently away from that power of the higher Divine and eternal life. It may work slowly and often obscurely, and men may theorise and speculate variously concerning it, but "the Kingdom of God is like unto leaven, which shall work till the whole is leavened."

What is needed is for men to apprehend the Cross in all the intensity of its expression of the evil of sin, and in all the fulness of the Divine Love that it manifests; to bring their whole life under its power; to let the Spirit of holy, universal Love that is poured forth through it possess and rule them; to see the Cross in its relation to that Kingdom of God towards which God has been for ever working, the realisation of which on the earth, and ultimately in the sphere of the unseen and eternal, is the great Divine purpose, the fulfilment of which alone

can give an ultimate meaning to life in this world, or bring a permanent good to man.

Reviewing the whole process of Evolution, by whomsoever presented, nothing seems clearer than that its goal is the Kingdom of God, and that through the Cross the power enters the world which can carry the process on to its eternal consummation. The perception of this gives a great peace to the heart. But it ought also to bring a strong inspiration to work with Christ for the accomplishment of that end for which He gave Himself, and which, while it is Divinely decreed, can only be realised through human endeavour—through God's Love living and working in and by us. We have the assurance that our work to this end cannot fail. It is that towards which God has been moving from the beginning, and in which the meaning of all His wondrous creative and redemptive working is to be found. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye *know* that your labour is not vain in the Lord."

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